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**VOLUME 41/42**

**2014/2015**



**FROM THE EDITOR**

*Welcome to Our New CTAM Editor*

**TEACHERS' WORKBOOK**

*Communication in Action: Educating Graduate Teaching Assistants in At-Risk Pedagogy*

**GENERAL INTEREST**

*God, Gays, and Voodoo: Voicing Blame after Katrina*

*Myth and the Paris Commune*

*Understanding Steve Jobs' use of Internal and External Ethos*

## COMMUNICATION AND THEATER ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA JOURNAL

Volume 41/42

2014/2015

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Minnesota State University, Mankato

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swieser@perham.k12.mn.us  
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carver@gloria.cord.edu  
ckadlecsek@gustavus.edu  
jurtel1@isd77.k12.mn.us

**CTAM Website:** <http://www.mnsu.edu/cmst/ctam/index.html>

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COMMUNICATION AND THEATER ASSOCIATION  
OF MINNESOTA JOURNAL

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## CTAM JOURNAL MISSION STATEMENT

The *Communication and Theater Association of Minnesota Journal* (CTAMJ) is the scholarly journal of the Communication and Theater Association of Minnesota (CTAM). The journal is an outlet for articles related to issues of discipline-related importance including articles discussing innovative teaching methods. All theoretical and methodological approaches are welcome.

Authors should submit an electronic copy of their work as a Word document by e-mail to the editor. A separate, electronic title page should include a 100-125 word abstract of the article, author's name and professional title, job title, the school or institutional affiliation of the author/s, a mailing address, and an e-mail address. Care should be taken that author identification has been removed from the manuscript itself for review purposes. **All manuscripts should be prepared according to current APA or MLA guidelines.**

CTAMJ encourages contributions from scholars and practitioners, who comprise all segments of the journal's readership, including K-12 educators, graduate school, community college, and college or university groups. The journal welcomes theoretical and applied articles from both the theater and communication disciplines. Capable scholars in the appropriate field will blindly review all general manuscripts.

No work will be accepted or rejected purely on the basis of its methodology or subject. Author sex, race, ethnic background, geographical location or work affiliation (secondary/college level, department, etc.) of the author(s) are never considered in making editorial judgments. The demands of the disciplines of speech communication and theater are key factors in the editorial judgments made. All editorial decisions attempt to balance these demands with the needs and interests of the journal's readers.

The journal is guided by three key principles:

- *To provide an outlet for the expression of diverse ideas.*
- *To publish high quality scholarship in the disciplines of Speech Communication and Theater.*
- *To meet the journal-related needs of CTAM and its members.*

## EDITORIAL POLICY

The call for Manuscripts goes out in the fall of the year and the deadline for submissions is in March of the following year. Details of how to submit are given in the Call which is sent to all members, departments, and announced in SPECTRA. Book review ideas should be queried with the editor in advance of the submission date. Book reviews are generally published if accepted on a space available basis. All articles are read anonymously by at least two associate editors. All author identification markings are removed from the articles and no editor reads the work of a colleague. Associate editors may submit articles to the journal, but their work must go through the process of blind review, just as any other submitter. The journal editor facilitates the process and makes final decisions based on the associate editor's recommendations and comments. If there are any questions about the process, please direct them to the journal editor.

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## FROM THE EDITOR

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First and foremost, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this Volume of the *CTAM Journal* including everyone who submitted manuscripts. We were very lucky to have had some truly excellent submissions last year. I want to thank the Associate Editors who review and re-review all of the manuscripts submitted. I have been exceptionally lucky to have such dedicated people willing to invest a lot of time and energy to make this journal great. I would have been lost without their efforts. As with past volumes, I am proud of the depth and breadth of the editorial team. *The CTAM Journal's* Associate Editors represent institutions throughout the United States but each and every one of them has, at one time or another, called Minnesota home and I am grateful that for their commitment to the Communication and Theater Association of Minnesota.

This is also my final volume of *CTAM-J*. I am proud of a lot of the work I have done as editor, including the recognition by the Central States Communication Association. I am not, however, especially proud of my last two years. Although some matters were beyond my control (I'm not going to lie, a stolen laptop was a setback from which I never really recovered) but many of them were within my control and I didn't handle them all well. A lot of manuscripts languished. For that, I apologize to everyone.

I am excited, too, to announce that *CTAM-J* will have a new editor. Dr. Michael Dreher of Bethel University will be taking over and I cannot think of anyone who would be a better person for the job. The Association is lucky to have him in this role.

All my gratitude,

James P. Dimock, Editor

*Communication & Theater Association of Minnesota Journal*

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## TEACHERS' WORKBOOK

### *FEATURED MANUSCRIPT*

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## Communication in Action: Educating Graduate Teaching Assistants in At-Risk Pedagogy

**Kristen P. Treinen, PhD**

Associate Professor of Communication Studies

Minnesota State University, Mankato

[Kristen.treinen@mnsu.edu](mailto:Kristen.treinen@mnsu.edu)

### Abstract

*I begin this paper with a glimpse into the literature concerning at-risk and antiracist theory in order to understand the connections between the two bodies of literature. Next, by combining two bodies of literature, I argue for the implementation of a pedagogy of hope, culturally relevant teaching, and empowerment for students in the classroom. Finally, I outline a course for graduate teaching assistants that explores the utility of a pedagogy of hope, culturally relevant teaching, and empowerment for students in the communication classroom.*

If we are to successfully educate all of our children, we must work to remove the blinders built of stereotypes, monocultural instructional methodologies, ignorance, social distance, biased research, and racism. (Delpit, 1995, p. 182)

While researching antiracist pedagogical theory, I came across the above quotation from Delpit (1995). After considering the call that Delpit puts forth in this statement, I began to consider the ways in which educators could address academically at-risk students by incorporating both at-risk theory and antiracist pedagogical theory. In this essay, I provide a design for a course for graduate teaching assistants' that specifically addresses at-risk and antiracist theory as it applies

to communication pedagogy. I begin this paper with a glimpse into the literature concerning at-risk and antiracist theory in order to understand the connections between the two bodies of literature. Next, by combining two bodies of literature, I argue for the implementation of a pedagogy of hope, culturally relevant teaching, and empowerment for students in the classroom. Finally, I outline a course for graduate teaching assistants that explores the utility of a pedagogy of hope, culturally relevant teaching, and empowerment for students in the communication classroom.

### **Understanding the Connections: At-Risk and Antiracist Theory**

The concern over students who have the potential to drop out of school has created an area of research called “at-risk.” Several academic disciplines, including communication studies and education, focus on the dilemmas that “at-risk” students face in educational settings. According to Johnson (1994), *High Risk Students* first appeared in the Educational Resources Information Center’s (ERIC) *Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors* in 1980 and is defined there as “students, with normal intelligence, whose academic background or prior performance may cause them to be perceived as candidates for future academic failure or early withdrawal.” It is interesting to note that prior 1980 and since the ERIC database was created in 1966, the concept of *High Risk Students* was indexed under *Disadvantaged Students* and *Underachievement* (p. 35).

The discipline of communication has its own operational definition of what constitutes an at-risk student. According to the National Communication Association’s Communication Needs of Students At-Risk Commission:

Students at-risk are unprepared to function effectively in the formal educational process.

These students often confront barriers due to educational deficiencies, diversity, and/or



external circumstances. While all of the barriers cannot be addressed in the communication classroom, our discipline should continue to seek communication strategies that will enhance their potential for success (as cited in Fassett, 1999).

For communication educators, studying the ways in which communication plays a role in a student's academic risk is an integral part of understanding how to help these students succeed academically. For instances, communication educators interested in helping students that are at-risk have researched how students' use communication to become socialized into a particular educational environment (Souza, 1999; Johnson, Staton, & Jorgensen-Earp, 1995) and why at-risk students experience higher communication apprehension or high anxiety when interacting in social situations. Communication researchers have also explored why at-risk students have lower perceived communication competency—the ability to communicate effectively (Chesebro, McCroskey, Atwater, Bahrenfuss, Cawelti, Gaudino, & Hodges, 1992; Garard & Hunt, 1998; Rosenfeld, Grant, & McCroskey, 1995), and why they perceive themselves to have an external locus of control or no control over what happens to them (Gorham & Self, 1986). These studies have allowed communication researchers to pinpoint communicative strategies that would help at-risk students overcome educational barriers to success.

Another body of research that is concerned with the academic success and failure of students is antiracist pedagogy. Antiracist pedagogy, a relatively new perspective, emerged out of the work of those interested in understanding and overcoming the marginalization of students of color. These researchers were looking to alter what multicultural education proponents have neglected to accomplish: “the life chances of minority students, the racialized attitudes of majority students, the inherent monoculturalism of school practices, and the wider processes of power relations and inequality that underpin all of these” (May, 1999, p. 1). Originally,

multicultural education grew out of the civil rights movement and was “grounded in democracy, social justice, and pluralism, and equality” (Sleeter & Montecinos, 1999, p. 115). While multicultural education was originally intended to empower members of minority races and create more cultural awareness, Sleeter (1991) contends that “many people approach[ed] multicultural education without thinking about social inequality or empowerment at all” (p. 2). Contemporary critics of multicultural education have argued for a multicultural approach that interrogates the power relations, inequalities, and racism that students of color have suffered at the hands of whiteness.

A central tenet in the work of antiracist pedagogy is deconstructing the invisibility and power of whiteness. As Apple (1997) contends, for white people “whiteness is something that you don’t have to think about. It is just there. It is a naturalized state of being. It is ‘normal.’ Anything else is ‘other.’ It is the there that is never there” (p. 127). Frankenberg (1997) illustrates the power that whiteness possesses in our schools and wider society. According to Frankenberg, “whiteness refers to a set of locations that are historically, socially, and politically and culturally produced and, moreover, are intrinsically linked to unfolding relations of domination” (p. 6). Antiracist pedagogues work to reposition whiteness in order to shift the cultural center of power and privilege.

An antiracist pedagogy moves beyond the superficial approaches to diversity, such as the food, fun, and festivals that are often associated with multicultural educational strategies. Instead, antiracist pedagogy focuses on what these “expressions of culture means: the values, the power relationships that shape the culture” (Lee, 1995, p. 10). One important goal of antiracist pedagogues is the investigation of “the impact that historic discrimination has on people of color, or the institutional racism that affect the lives of people of color” (O’Grady, 1998, p. 217) in

order to create “equality, justice, and emancipation for minorities students” (Rezai-Reshati, 1995, p. 7).

Antiracist pedagogues work to reposition the power and privilege of whiteness through an examination of the curriculum and methods employed in our classrooms. For instance, in the speech communication classroom, educators might engage students in a critique of the ways in which Eurocentric perspectives are dominant in the speaking styles that are privileged in public speaking. Racism is perpetuated in the classroom by a Eurocentric curriculum. Derman-Sparks (1995) argues that “by implicitly setting up the dominant culture as the norm, we end up equating ‘We are all the same,’ with ‘We are all white’” (p. 19). A Eurocentric curriculum reflects the experiences, ideologies, and practices of white, male, middle-class perspectives. For instance, Churchill (1995) contends that “most introductory courses in American History still begin for all practical purposes in 1492, with only the most perfunctory acknowledgment that people existed in the Americas in pre-Columbian times” (p. 19). Antiracist pedagogues that are concerned with teachers and teaching effectiveness work to change the curriculum to include the histories and cultures of marginalized people. They move beyond an additive approach (a unit here or there) to implementing structural changes in order to alter that which is at the center of the curriculum.

Antiracist pedagogical researchers work to create more space in the classroom for the experience and cultural backgrounds of students who have been systematically oppressed by the current structure of our schools. An antiracist pedagogy attempts to reposition *whose* knowledge and *whose* experiences are legitimate in order to create more accurate representations of all students in the classroom. Through work in whiteness studies, educators are able to begin to mark the unmarked and make the invisible visible.

## **A New Approach to Teaching Academically At-Risk Students**

Working through the problems of students “at-risk” in our schools has led me to propose three alternative educational practices that might ensure that more students are receiving what they need to succeed academically. I believe the problems that many students face are due to the systemic nature of racism in our classrooms and because of this, I do not want to minimize the complexities of these problems. However, if we educators begin to work on solutions to these issues and also work to reflect upon their classroom strategies, we might begin to see a change in the drop-out rates of all students, especially the dropout rate of students of color. I propose that to start systematically attacking the problems in our schools, we must begin to incorporate "culturally relevant teaching" (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Next, in order to reassign the problems that children face in the classroom as innate, we need to begin using what Macedo (1998) calls a pedagogy of hope or a humanizing pedagogy (p. xxi). Finally, empowering students to have a claim in their education may start when we begin to share decisions with our students.

Educators must begin altering the current educational structures by incorporating culturally relevant teaching; teachers need to bring in materials that reflect the lives of all students. In Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994) book, Dreamkeepers, she suggests that “we must not legitimate the inequity that exists in the nation’s schools, but attempt to delegitimize it by placing it under scrutiny” (p. 130). Culturally relevant teaching involves using parts of the students’ home and school culture, including language, to “transcend the negative effects of the dominant culture” (p. 17). For instance, rectifying the lack of representation of students of colors’ cultures, histories, and backgrounds in textbooks, school staffing choices and classroom methodologies is an important start.

Ladson-Billings (1994) explains that

culturally relevant teaching is about questioning (and preparing students to question) the structural inequality, the racism, and injustice that exist in society. The teachers I studied work in opposition to the system that employs them. They are critical of the way that the school system treats employees, students, parents, and activities in the community.

However, they cannot let their critique reside solely in words. They must turn it into action by challenging the system. What they do is both their lives and their livelihoods.

In their classrooms, they practice a subversive pedagogy. (p. 128)

An educator interested in helping all students succeed, especially those oppressed under the current conditions of our schools, must move to praxis -- from theory to practice. This is not simply to suggest that an educator must have access to entirely new curricular materials in a classroom. Assignments, activities, and class discussions can be shaped around a critique of the existing curriculum and administrative limitations. For instance, an instructor of a communication course might engage students in a critique of the assumptions embedded in the textbook that is currently being used, or the communication styles that are privileged by the way public speaking is taught in the college classroom.

The contributors to the book *Speaking the Unpleasant: The Politics of (non) Engagement in the Multicultural Education Terrain* (1998) call for a pedagogy of hope. Macedo explains that a pedagogy of hope moves beyond “a facile pedagogy of tolerance” which proposes veiling new forms of racism. Instead, a pedagogy of hope or humanization “rejects the social construction of images that dehumanize the ‘other’; a pedagogy of hope that points out that in our construction of the ‘other’ we become intimately tied to the ‘other’; a pedagogy that teaches us that by dehumanizing the ‘other’ we become dehumanizing ourselves” (p. xxi). A pedagogy of hope begins with respect, honesty, and solidarity (p. xxi). Educators engaged in pedagogy of hope help

students to recognize that positioning people of color as the “other” only serves to perpetuate ignorance and the denial that difference is to be valued. For instance, educators that continue to treat all students as if they are the *same*, as if their race does not matter, are engaged in colorblindness. Engaging in colorblindness ignores difference and the acknowledgment that we bring our cultural differences with us to the classroom in the form of prior knowledge, experience, and learning styles. Colorblindness, or the claim that one does not see their students’ race, is nearly impossible. As Nieto (1998) contends, “racial differences and attitudes about them figure prominently in teachers attitudes and beliefs about why some students succeed and others do not, about their notions of intelligence, and about definitions of students from culturally and politically subordinated background primarily in terms of deficits” (p. 18).

Through implementing culturally relevant teaching practices, and a pedagogy of hope/humanization, educators might begin to help students empower themselves in the classroom. Empowerment has been defined in several different ways. For the purpose of this essay, I have selected McLaren’s definition of empowerment. He states that empowerment is “the process through which students learn to critically appropriate knowledge existing outside their immediate experience in order to broaden their understanding of themselves, the world, and the possibilities for transforming the taken-for-granted assumptions about the way we live” (as cited in Sleeter, 1991, p. 3). This is not to imply that the way we currently structure our classrooms is appropriate for all students, instead, white educators and white students must begin to step out of their own experiences to help transform the educational experiences of students oppressed by the current structure of our schools. Sleeter (1991) argues that “empowerment for social change is an inextricable component of multicultural education” (p. 1-2). However, as I cautioned before, multicultural education without social justice and democracy for all students

only acts as a way to promote the “otherizing” of students of color and the recentering of whiteness in the curriculum.

Sleeter (1991) argues that students of color may be empowered in the classroom in the following ways: 1) incorporating students’ culture and language in educational programs; 2) collaborative community participation; and 3) a pedagogy oriented toward reciprocal interaction (p. 5). An empowering educational setting incorporates the experiences of the students and the students’ home communities to “build on what they bring; disabling programs ignore and attempt to eradicate knowledge and strengths students bring, and replace them with those of the dominant society” (Sleeter, 1991, p.5). For instance, educators might begin empowering students in the classroom by allowing them to have several different choices when it comes to completing assignments. Students then may be able to find a version of the assignment that reflects the way they learn best, their cultural backgrounds, and their experiences.

An empowering education does not include the use of the banking model of teaching – teachers transmitting information to passive students. Instead an education of empowerment “demands taking seriously the strengths, experiences, strategies, and goals members of oppressed groups have” (Sleeter, 1991, p. 6). An educator working to help empower his/her students would ask students to help him/her identify the ways in which racism is evident in our schools. An empowering education should recognize that the experiences and knowledge that students possess should be taken seriously as legitimate.

An empowering education also helps students see themselves as part of a collective community that can help them achieve as individuals while engaging in activities collectively. Sleeter (1991) provides the example of people with disabilities. She explains that “people with disabilities often do not see themselves as part of a potentially powerful collective” (p. 7). Also,

oppressed groups must be able to define what empowerment means for them. Educators should not decide for students that have been traditionally "at-risk" what their agenda is or how they should go about becoming empowered. Educators do not empower students; instead, educators create the conditions necessary to empower students.

In light of the discourse of at-risk literature and antiracist pedagogy, educators have several different ways to approach teaching student who have been traditionally disadvantaged by our educational system. An implementation of culturally relevant teaching practices is a starting point for creating educational experiences that allow all students succeed in school. A pedagogy of hope is also an alternative educational practice that will help legitimate all students' experiences and backgrounds. Finally, creating the conditions for an empowering education increase the chances of academic success for all students.

## **The Course Curriculum**

What would a course in communication and the at-risk student for graduate students look like? The course outlined in the remainder of this paper presents several areas of study that I argue are essential for improving the pedagogy in the communication classroom. While this course will focus on the theoretical background, there will also be practical application of these theories in order to help the graduate students begin to work on their pedagogical practice.

## **Course Description**

This course is designed to enhance the pedagogical skills of graduate teaching assistants and prospective teachers. The course explores and critically examines the at-risk theory in the discipline of communication. The course also introduces critical pedagogical theories for potential application in the communication classroom. Students will develop skills and strategies



necessary to enhance the learning environment for at-risk students in the communication classroom through the use of antiracist and critical pedagogical practice.

### ***Course Objectives and Goals***

- Students will articulate the connections between at-risk theory and communication education
- Student will identify the ways in which communication is important to the success of academically at-risk students.
- Students will articulate the goals of incorporating antiracist pedagogy in the communication classroom
- Students will identify the connection between antiracist pedagogy and the at-risk literature.
- Students will articulate ways to implement strategies that incorporate at-risk and antiracist theory in their classrooms.

### **Course Units of Study**

This course has been divided into four units of study that will provide graduate teaching assistants with a solid foundation for addressing the needs of at-risk students.

#### **Unit I: Communication Needs of At-Risk Students [Week 1-4]**

In order to conceptualize the communication needs of at-risk students, graduate teaching assistants (and other students enrolled in the course) must understand the obstacles that academically at-risk students encounter (both in our schools and in society). This unit consists of two major topics: 1) epidemiological models of at-risk, and 2) ecological models of at-risk. Epidemiological models of academic failure can provide educators with specific identifiers within the student that may doom him/her for academic failure. These models also provide educators with cures or prescribe solutions for schools to help improve the academic success of these students. Critics of these models argue that there is more to educational failure than a

child's innate deficiencies. Researchers interested in analyzing the impact a student's environment has on their chances of academic success or failure have adapted Bronfenbrenner's ecological network. Through an examination of the systems that affect a student's life, educators hope to improve the parts of the system that may cause a student to drop out of school. Under this logic, a child that is having problem at home may bring these problems to the school in the form of late homework assignments or missed school days. In this unit, students will become aware of the problems that those defined as academically at-risk face, and investigate solutions that would help a student find answers to the problems that hinder him/her from being productive in schools.

### ***Tentative Reading.***

Gorham, J., & Self, L. (1986). Developing communication skills: Learning style and the educationally disadvantaged student. Paper presented at the Speech Communication Conference, Chicago.

Peart, N. A. & Campbell, F. A. (1999). At-risk students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness. *Journal for a Just and Caring Education*, 5, 269-284.

Nunn, G., & Parish, T. (1992). The psychosocial characteristics of at-risk high school students. *Adolescence*, 27, 435-439

McMillan, J., & Reed, D. (1994). At-risk students and resiliency: Factors Contributing to academic success. *The Clearing House*, 137-140.

Johnson, G. M. (1994). An ecological framework for conceptualizing educational risk. *Urban Education*, 29, 34-49.

Johnson, G., Staton, A., & Jorgensen-Earp, C. (1995). An ecological perspective on the transition of new university freshmen. *Communication Education*, 44, 336-352.

Souza, T. J. (1999). Communication and alternative student socialization.

*Communication Education*, 48, p. 91-108.

Rosow, L. (1989). Arthur: A tale of disempowerment. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 71, 194-199.

Mirman, J., Swartz, R., & Barell, J. (1988). Strategies to help teachers empower at-risk students. In B. Presseisen, (Ed.), *At-risk students and thinking: Perspectives from research*, (pp. 138-156). Washington, DC: NEA/RBS.

Blount, H., & Wells, M. (1992). Battering children educationally. *Contemporary Education*, 64, 21-24.

### ***Activities***

- Draw your interpretation of an epidemiological model of at-risk. Discuss your ideas with the class. What are the educational implications of your model?
- Draw your interpretation of the ecological model of at-risk. Discuss w/the class your rationale for this model. How is it similar to Brofenbrenner's model? How is it different from Brofenbrenner's model?
- In small groups, discuss how you can address the communication needs of at-risk students in your classroom. Identify three specific ways that you could meet at-risk students' needs in your classroom.

### **Unit II: Critical Pedagogy: Empowering Students in the Classroom [Week 5-8]**

In order to change the educational experiences of at-risk students, students must understand the role of critical pedagogy as a way to address the problems that these students face in the traditional classroom. The first section of this unit will include an examination of the theory proposed by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. Freire is believed by many to have inspired the work

of critical educators in America. In light of Freire's research, the role of the teacher, the role of the students, and democratic power-sharing will be explored.

### ***Tentative Reading.***

Freire, P. (2001). *Pedagogy of the oppressed; 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition*. New York: Continuum.

Shor, I. (1996). *When students have power: Negotiating authority in a critical pedagogy*. University of Chicago Press. [Chps. 1-3]

### ***Activities.***

- Create an activity influenced by Freire's work. For instance, you could design a liberatory activity, or redesign a course that you believe could benefit from Freire's ideas.
- Bring in a sample activity that you use or an instructor you have had used in class.
- Identify whether this activity is empowering for you/your students.
- Adapt the above mentioned activity to be more empowering for the students in the class. Share this activity with the class in order to obtain feedback on how to improve your activity.

## **Unit III: Antiracist Pedagogy: Encouraging a Pedagogy of Hope [Week 9-12]**

This unit consists of introducing students to the basic tenets of antiracist pedagogy. For instance, students will examine the nature of racism in educational institutions. The students will also explore what antiracist pedagogues believe is at the core of racism: whiteness. The unquestioned normality of whiteness and white privilege in educational institutions and wider

society will also be investigated. Finally, students will be asked to consider how a pedagogy of hope relates to the work of antiracist pedagogues in the communication classroom.

### ***Tentative Readings.***

- Churchill, W. (1995). White studies: The intellectual imperialism of U.S. higher education. In S. Jackson & J. Solis (Eds.), *Beyond comfort zones in multiculturalism: confronting the politics of privilege*. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey.
- McIntosh, P. White privilege and male privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondences through work in women's studies. In K. Rousmaniere, & K. Abowitz (Eds.), *Readings in sociocultural studies in education* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp. 189-195). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- hooks, b. (2000). Overcoming white supremacy: A comment. In E. M. Duarte & S. Smith (Eds.), *Foundational perspectives in multicultural education* (pp. 178-111-117). New York: Longman
- Thompson, A. (1997). For: Anti-racist education. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 27 (1), p. 7-44.
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## ***Activities***

- In dyads, discuss your reaction to Churchill's and McIntosh's arguments. In what ways do you agree with these two researchers? In what ways do you disagree with these researchers?
- In small groups of three, discuss antiracist pedagogy. What is antiracist pedagogy? What are the goals of antiracist pedagogy? How can you implement antiracist pedagogy in your classroom?
- In small groups of three, discuss the implications of antiracist pedagogy for the basic oral communication course/ another communication course you have taught/taken.

## Unit IV: Culturally Relevant Teaching [Week 13-16]

This unit will consist of synthesizing the at-risk theory, the critical pedagogical research and antiracist research together. Culturally relevant teaching will be the theme for this unit. In other words, this unit will act as a summary for the course. A major influence for this unit will be Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994) book, *Dreamkeepers*. In the book, she suggests that “we must not legitimate the inequity that exists in the nation’s schools, but attempt to delegitimize it by placing it under scrutiny” (p. 130). Students will explore the connections between critical pedagogy and antiracist pedagogy as sources for systematic change in the lives of those students who have been labeled “at-risk.”

### ***Tentative Readings.***

Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Delpit, L. (1995). *Other people’s children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. (pp. 167-183). New York: The New Press.

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### ***Activities.***

- In groups, discuss Ladson-Billings’ definition of culturally relevant teaching.
- Explain the educational implications of her argument. How does Delpit’s argument reflect Ladson-Billings’ idea of culturally relevant teaching?

- Analyze the SPEE 100/SPEE 102 courses taught at MSU, M. What communication style is privileged? Indicate four reasons for your assertion. What are the implications for students of your findings?

### Course Assignments

1. *Online Discussions*: Students will be required to enroll in the course management system, such as Desire2Learn (which is free of charge and used to administer classes online). After enrolled, students will be required to take part in online discussions twice weekly where they can ask and answer questions about the readings for the week.
2. *At-Risk Project*: Students will be placed in groups of three. They will be asked to identify and research the resources on campus that are designed to help the academically at-risk student. Each student in the group should collect literature, brochures, and statements in the university literature about the program. Students will be asked to analyze the material and determine if the service provided is based out of the epidemiological models of at-risk or the ecological models of at-risk.
3. *Discussion Facilitation*: Each student will be responsible for leading the class discussion on the material presented in class. The majority of the students that might enroll in this course are teachers, or will be teachers in the near future, one skill that all teachers need to develop is group discussion facilitation. Therefore, each student in the course will be asked to present an article or chapter that we are reading and construct an activity, discussion, or lecture that will give us a clearer understanding of the material.
4. *Reaction Papers*: Students will complete four reaction papers during the course of the semester. Each paper will be due following the completion of a unit in order to help students



synthesize the material for each unit. For instance, the first reaction paper will ask students to articulate their teaching philosophy in light of the at-risk research.

## Conclusion

The course described in this paper fills a gap that is needed in the field of communication – that of exploring the ways in which at-risk students could benefit from a critical approach to classroom teaching. The lack of meaningful representations of non-white students in our schools causes many students to be placed academically at risk in our classrooms. The plight of these students has prompted me to engage in research that crosses theoretical boundaries in order to provide students with the most effective education. My past research has suggested that students labeled as academically at-risk would benefit from combining the at-risk and antiracist theory. The course described in this paper is not an end; rather, it is a means to continuing the dialogue concerning new approaches to educating graduate teaching assistants as well as new approaches to teaching students who have been labeled academically at-risk.

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## GENERAL INTEREST ARTICLES

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### God, Gays, and Voodoo: Voicing Blame after Katrina

**Jefferson Walker**

Visiting Instructor, Department of Communication Studies

University of Southern Mississippi

[JDWalker2@crimson.ua.edu](mailto:JDWalker2@crimson.ua.edu)

#### Abstract

*Much of the public discourse following Hurricane Katrina's devastating impact on Louisiana and much of the Gulf Coast in 2005 focused on placing blame. This paper focuses on those critics who stated that Hurricane Katrina was "God's punishment" for people's sins. Through a narrative analysis of texts surrounding Hurricane Katrina, I explicate the ways in which individuals argued about God's judgment and punishment. I specifically turn my attention to three texts: First, a Repent America press release entitled "Hurricane Katrina Destroys New Orleans Days Before 'Southern Decadence,'" second, a newsletter released by Rick Scarborough of Vision America, and third, Democratic Mayor of New Orleans, Ray Nagin's "Chocolate City" Speech.*

Much public discourse in the aftermath of natural disasters and national tragedies focuses on placing blame. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) continues to be blamed for its insufficient 2012 relief efforts related to Hurricane Sandy. In response to mass shootings, including the 2009 attack on Fort Hood, Texas and the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre, the public blamed everyone from the National Rifle Association (NRA) to the video game industry. One of the most notable events in recent years to feature such rhetoric of blame was Hurricane Katrina, which had a devastating impact on Louisiana and much of the Gulf Coast in 2005. In the public discourse that followed the storm, many individuals criticized the federal and state governments for not responding to the crisis with swiftness or efficiency. Others criticized local officials, such as New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin, for their perceived ineptitude.

While most of the criticism focused on relief efforts, some individuals and organizations passed judgment on what they believed to be the very reasons for the hurricane's destruction. Rather than blaming the failures of levees or evacuation efforts, these critics cried out that Hurricane Katrina was "God's punishment" for people's sins.

Conservative Christians were largely responsible for rhetoric claiming God was punishing the region for its sins. Pat Robertson, the founder of the Christian Coalition of America, linked Katrina to legalized abortion ("Religious Conservatives Claim," 2005). Charles Colson, a Christian radio-commentator, related the disaster to terrorism saying, "Katrina gave us a preview of what America would look like if we fail to fight the war on terror. 'Did God have anything to do with Katrina?,' people ask. My answer is, he allowed it and perhaps he allowed it to get our attention so that we don't delude ourselves into thinking that all we have to do is put things back the way they were and life will be normal again" (as quoted in "Religious Conservatives Claim," 2005). Others identified LGBT rights activists, the culture of New Orleans, and other issues as the causes for "God's punishment." Black Baptist pastor Dwight McKissic decried, "They openly practice voodoo and devil worship in New Orleans . . . God's wrath may have howled in Katrina's winds because New Orleans thumbed his nose at the Almighty" (as quoted in Crocco and Grolnick, 2008). David Crowe, another minister, echoed these sentiments adding, "We've known for decades and longer that New Orleans has been a place where immorality is flaunted and Christian values are laughed at. It is the epitome of a place where they mock God" (as quoted in Crocco and Grolnick, 2008).

The religious right did not monopolize the conversation, however, as instances of this type of rhetoric occurred on all sides of the political and ideological aisles. Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Chicago-based Nation of Islam, argued God was punishing America for its racism

and classism with Hurricane Katrina (Dyson, 2007). Instead of blaming specific groups or individuals, this type of discourse claimed the hurricane was divine punishment aimed at the nation. Still other discourse of blame came from outside of the country. Ovadia Yosef, a spiritual leader in the Israeli parliament, stated Katrina was God's punishment for America's withdrawal of Jewish settlers from the Gaza Strip (Dyson, 2007). Meanwhile, Al Qaida in Iraq issued a statement that "God attacked America and the prayers of the oppressed were answered" (as quoted in Dyson, 2007, p. 180).

Through a narrative analysis of texts surrounding Hurricane Katrina, I explicate the ways in which individuals argued about God's judgment and punishment. I specifically turn my attention to three texts: First, a Repent America press release titled "Hurricane Katrina Destroys New Orleans Days Before 'Southern Decadence'" (2005), second, a newsletter released by Rick Scarborough of Vision America (2005), and third, Democratic Mayor of New Orleans, Ray Nagin's "Chocolate City" Speech (2006). While these three texts are not representative of every point of view expressed by rhetors invoking "God's punishment," they do provide glimpses of strategies used by such rhetors. Herein, this article is broken into four sections. First, I review literature related to theodicies and the rhetoric of blame and victimage. Second, I describe narrative criticism as a method appropriate for analyzing theodic rhetoric and blame-related discourse. Third, I apply narrative criticism to my three chosen texts. Finally, I conclude with an explanation of implications and areas for future research.

### **Theodicies and Victimage: Invoking God's Judgment**

Rhetoric citing God's judgment is not new or unique to Hurricane Katrina. Discourse focusing on wars, HIV/AIDS, and other issues has often claimed that God or a higher power was punishing individuals for their sins. Michael Eric Dyson (2007) notes that many past and present



interpretations of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity cling to the notion that God punishes wicked individuals for their sins. Using the term theodicy (meaning, “the justice of God”), Dyson argues, “theodicies have sprung up in their wake to explain natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, and droughts. Some theodicies maintain that disasters are the wages of sin, some argue that they are signs of the apocalypse, while still others contend that they cleanse evil from the earth” (2007, p. 188). Dyson gives a brief and informal history of this type of rhetoric, stating that it has become less pervasive as scientific investigations have advanced. Dyson argues that the theodicies prevalent in the discourse surrounding Katrina show instances of homophobia and racism. Dyson’s work is insightful, as he briefly examines quotations from various ministers and leaders. However, he stops short of providing an in-depth analysis of any one particular text. In this article, I critically examine several texts employing theodic rhetoric, expanding upon Dyson’s arguments and bringing forth new implications.

An integral part of theodic rhetoric is the concept of victimage, or scapegoating. Kenneth Burke described the scapegoat as, “the ‘representative’ or ‘vessel’ of certain unwanted evils, the sacrificial animal upon whose back the burden of these evils is ritualistically unloaded” (1974, pp. 39-40). Burke explained that one way to scapegoat a person includes, “making him an offender against legal or moral justice, so that he ‘deserves’ what he gets” (p. 40). Relating the ideas of victimage and blame to theodicies, Rountree (1995) wrote “The President as God, the Recession as Evil, *Actus*, *Status*, and the President’s Rhetorical Bind in the 1992 Election.” Rountree discusses George H. W. Bush’s deflection of theodic blame throughout the 1992 presidential election and offers implications related to “understanding the inventional opportunities and constraints involved when one is charged with responsibility for evil” (p. 345).

Rountree's analysis views rhetoric originating from the individual being blamed and victimized; this analysis instead focuses on the act of placing blame.

While little communication research discusses theodic discourse in relation to disasters and crises, much attention has been paid to victimage and blame during crisis events. For example, Seeger and Ulmer (2002) discuss crisis related discourse as "most often about hard responsibility, fault, culpability, blame, guilt, liability, compensation and victimage" (p. 126). More specifically related to the public discourse surrounding Hurricane Katrina are Cole and Fellows' (2008) "Risk Communication Failure: A Case Study of New Orleans and Hurricane Katrina," as well as Davis and French's (2008) "Blaming Victims and Survivors: An Analysis of Post-Katrina Print News Coverage." Cole and Fellows (2008) examined governmental documents, along with local and national media coverage to determine the ways in which risk communication failed during Hurricane Katrina. One of the authors' conclusions was that risk understandings differ among audiences of different ethnicities, classes, genders, and races. Cole and Fellows focused on the effects of discourse that did or did not take these differences into account; my study offers implications related to the reasons these cultural differences were not dealt with appropriately. Davis and French (2008) completed a critical discourse analysis of post-Katrina news stories, finding that the news media largely blamed "victims" and "survivors" for the failures of the area in dealing with the hurricane. The alarming notion that print media shifted blame towards Katrina's "victims" is especially relevant to this analysis. My analysis offers implications related to the fact that both print media discourse and theodic discourse placed blame on "victims."

As evidenced by this literature review, much scholarly attention has been paid to the role of communication during crises and disasters. Specific attention has also been given to Hurricane

Katrina and the role public discourse has in placing blame on groups and individuals. However, little research touches upon theodicies in the aftermath of disasters. As individuals of diverse ideological and political backgrounds made use of theodic rhetoric after Katrina, this topic becomes worth examining. In addition, as Christianity and other religions have vast influence over our communities, it is worth investigating how appeals related to God or a higher power function. Therefore, this analysis seeks to determine how rhetors placed blame on groups and/or individuals in post-Katrina discourse. By examining the rhetorical strategies these rhetors used, this paper offers implications dealing with race, religion, and other cultural variables as they relate specifically to Hurricane Katrina, and more generally to crisis discourse.

### **The Narrative Approach**

This study employs the narrative method of criticism, which originates from Walter R. Fisher's (1984) landmark essay, "Narration as Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument." Fisher explains that human beings are essentially storytellers who create their social realities through the composition of myths and narratives. Fisher argues that narratives enable individuals to make sense of actions, events, and other life experiences. Sonja K. Foss (2004) adds, "Narratives organize the stimuli of our experience so that we can make sense of the people, places, events, and actions of our lives. They allow us to interpret reality because they help us decide what a particular experience 'is about' and how the various elements of our experience are connected" (p. 333). In short, narratives tie our experiences together in coherent ways that provide "truth[s]" about the "human condition," and influence our future beliefs and actions (Fisher, 1984, p. 7).

Narrative criticism involves an analysis of the narratives inherent in artifacts, such as speeches, novels, songs, films, and articles. A critic identifies the dimensions (e.g., setting,

characters, and themes) of the narrative in an effort to determine how the narrative functions. As Gary Selby (2001) points out, “(Narrative) studies share the conviction that narrative is more than simply a rhetorical device used to embellish rational argument” (p. 74). Narratives can play a crucial role in all of human understanding, altering an audience’s perceptions of the past, present, and future, while creating a “sense of collective identity” (p. 73). A narrative’s influence “depends upon establishing the story as the primary context for understanding people and events” (Lewis, 2005, p. 277). A narrative that successfully does this becomes hegemonic through its clarity, completeness, and perceived reliability.

As a narrative is influential and much more than a simple rhetorical device, a narrative critic’s purpose likewise becomes greater than simply uncovering the narrative elements of a text. Timothy A. Borchers (2006) highlights three purposes for critical theorists, which apply more specifically for narrative critics, as well. First, a critic investigates the meaning or meanings of a text as they are related to its contexts and audiences. Second, a critic explores the ways in which a text influences the culture it exists in. Finally, a critic evaluates the text as “good or bad, positive or negative, or desirable or undesirable” (p. 176). With respect to this purpose, critics do not always make ethical judgments on behalf of their readers, but they concern themselves with issues of power in an effort to “hold sources accountable for the influence they wield” (Bennett & O’Rourke, 2006, p. 56). Brummett (2006) explains, “Critical studies examines what power is or what it has been understood to be, and how power is created, maintained, shared, lost, and seized” (p. 101). Narrative critics are interested in the ways in which narratives empower or disempower segments of society.

As a flexible method that allows critics to focus on components of narratives that are most prevalent or significant, narrative criticism allows me to focus specifically on rhetoric

related to blame and victimage. In addition, narratives are central to theodic discourse. The theodic discourse of movements, such as the Civil Rights Movement, has overtly relied on Biblical narratives, such as the Moses/Exodus narrative. Selby (2001) examines the ways in which Martin Luther King, Jr. used the Exodus narrative in “Framing Social Protest: The Exodus Narrative in Martin Luther King’s Montgomery Bus Boycott Rhetoric.” In the article, Selby describes the ways in which King used the narrative to present himself as a “Moses” figure to the African American community, in addition to being “able to explain their present circumstances, urge their engagement in united action, and promise their eventual success” (p. 70). King did this by adapting the Exodus narrative to fit within his rhetorical situation. In similar ways, other rhetors adapt Biblical narratives to fit their situation—and to shape a collective identity, create a common enemy, explain their current circumstances, and predict their future struggles and successes. In my analysis, I observe how theodic discourse during the aftermath of Katrina did this by victimizing (thereby, alleviating blame from themselves), explaining the current post-Katrina situation, and predicting the future (e.g., as a better place because of the lessons from Katrina, or as an apocalyptic world).

### **Katrina Discourse: Three Theodic Texts**

#### **“God destroyed a wicked city”**

The first text, a press release called “Hurricane Katrina Destroys New Orleans Days before ‘Southern Decadence,’” was published by Repent America, a large Philadelphia-based Christian organization, on August 31, 2005. The press release provides a scathing outlook of New Orleans and provides hope for a city “full of righteousness” in the future.

The press release’s title shows the primary focus of the text: blaming a celebration of homosexuality for the hurricane’s destruction. The press release states, “‘Southern Decadence’

has a history of filling the French Quarter section of the city with drunken homosexuals engaging in sex acts in the public streets and bars.” Here, the press release clearly defines an enemy: the LGBT community. The release shows the enormity of the enemy by citing the Southern Decadence website which stated that “125,000 revelers” came to the annual event in 2004. Through highlighting the sheer size of the event, combined with alcohol use and public displays of homosexuality, the press release clearly tries to reach an audience of conservative Christians and creates a formidable and alarming enemy. However, the release further expands the size and scope of the enemy in order to more fully justify Katrina as “God’s punishment.” The release states, “New Orleans was also known for its Mardi Gras parties where thousands of drunken men would revel in the streets to exchange plastic jewelry for drunken women to expose their breasts and to engage in other sex acts. This annual event sparked the creation of the ‘Girls Gone Wild’ video series.” The release goes on to discuss the number of abortions and murders in the city to further paint the people of the city as villains.

Importantly, the press release expands the enemy even further to include the public officials of New Orleans. The release states, “The past three mayors of New Orleans, including Sidney Bartholomew, Marc H. Morial, and C. Ray Nagin, issued official proclamations welcoming visitors to ‘Southern Decadence’. Additionally, New Orleans City Council made other proclamations recognizing the annual homosexual celebration.” The text also tells the story of a pastor who sent a video of men at Southern Decadence festivities engaged in sexual acts to city officials, who “ignored the footage and continued to welcome and praise the weeklong celebration as being an ‘exciting event.’” This not only identifies an enemy, but also builds identity and shifts any blame for the situation away from themselves. The pastor represents the group—conservative Christians who tried to help but were turned away. In this narrative, they

did their part but were unsuccessful which led to the current situation where “Hurricane Katrina . . . put an end to the annual celebration of sin.”

Finally, the press release describes the current circumstance faced by group members and provides a glimpse at future successes. The press release quotes Repent America director Michael Marcavage who says, “Although the loss of lives is deeply saddening, this act of God destroyed a wicked city . . .” Again, the current situation is described as an unfortunate necessity in God's plan for the world. Marcavage goes on to say, “We must help and pray for those ravaged by this disaster, but let us not forget that the citizens of New Orleans tolerated and welcomed the wickedness in their city for so long . . . May this act of God cause us all to think about what we tolerate in our city limits, and bring us trembling before the throne of Almighty God.” The current situation is further described as one in which they should assist those affected by the hurricane through prayer and other methods, while remembering that the victims brought the events upon themselves. Future actions are also proposed as audience members are encouraged to stop being tolerant of deeds they deem sinful in their communities. A proposal of intolerance is powerful in that members are called upon to stop certain groups from engaging and even existing. Marcavage additionally says, “From the devastation may a city full of righteousness emerge.” Here lies the goal: that through rebuilding the historic city in a new way and by refusing to tolerate the behaviors of certain groups of people, a city of God will surface.

### **“When God brings the deluge . . .”**

The second text, a September 2005 newsletter written by Rich Scarborough, echoes many of the thoughts published by Repent America. Scarborough of Vision America, a conservative Christian political organization, again makes the case that God is punishing the citizens of New Orleans for their sins.

Scarborough seems understanding and sympathetic as he begins the text saying, “I have many friends living between New Orleans and Mobile . . . I've struggled to choke back tears as I've watched the devastation and followed news accounts. Please keep these precious people in your prayers.” However, he quickly comes to his main point that “disasters . . . are a constant reminder that—by their actions—nations, as well as individuals, are judged.” Scarborough argues that the enemy and the current circumstances coincide. The current circumstance—a nation devastated by Katrina and other unnamed disasters—was caused by the people of the nation. He states,

After September 11, 2001, 'God bless America' was on everyone's lips. But what, exactly, are we asking God to bless - a nation moving a [sic] breakneck speed toward homosexual marriage, a nation awash in pornography, a nation in which our children are indoctrinated in perversion in the public schools, a nation in which most public displays of The Ten Commandments are considered offensive to the Constitution, a nation in which the elite does all in its considerable power to efface our Biblical heritage?

Rather than blaming the specific actions of the citizens of New Orleans, Scarborough casts a larger net and blames the country as a whole. He says, “We are sowing the wind. Surely we shall reap the whirlwind.” He essentially argues that God punished the nation with Hurricane Katrina in response to the nation's actions. Specific blame falls on the nation for embracing (or, at least, tolerating) homosexuality, pornography, and the separation of church and state. Scarborough continues by stating, “One other factor which must be considered: Days before Katrina nearly wiped New Orleans off the map, 9,000 Jewish residents of Gaza were driven from their homes with the full support of the United States government. Could this be a playing out of prophesy (I



will bless that nation that blesses you, and curse the nation that curses you')?" Scarborough provides a laundry list of evils that led to the current circumstances, creating a massive enemy. He also expands upon items in the list, describing legislative push for same-sex marriage.

After painting a broad picture of both the current circumstances and enemy, Scarborough looks specifically at New Orleans. He states, "Scriptures teach us that God will not be mocked. The scenes of devastation in New Orleans we're witnessing on the nightly news show us a catastrophe of Biblical proportions . . . If that weren't enough, the chaos that's sweeping the ravaged city is a sad reminder that when God brings the deluge, the floodgates will open and unimaginable evil will wash over us." The author goes on to cite instances of violence that occurred in the aftermath of the hurricane as these examples of "evil" that arose after "God's punishment." He further describes individuals directly involved as "human beasts preying on the most vulnerable of the hurricane's victims."

Although Scarborough identifies the enemy as the entire nation and uses the word "we" throughout the newsletter, he more subtly distinguishes the enemy from his target audience, with whom he establishes a common identity. By calling on individuals to pray and by stating that "God is always speaking to us," Scarborough establishes his audience as a "people of faith." Clearly, this conservative Christian audience is different from the enemy—one led by an elite trying to "efface our Biblical heritage." He then gives specific instructions for his target audience's future struggles and successes. He states, "If you're shocked and saddened as I am by the foregoing—if you understand that it's up to people of faith to save our beloved country, before it's too late there's something important you can do right now." He then asks audience members to register for a Vision America sponsored conference called "Countering the War on Faith." Scarborough's motive is then two-fold. Clearly, there are profit-making intentions, as

Conference-goers must pay registration fees of \$149 or \$259. Secondly, he discusses the goals and outcomes of the conference: to “show Christians how to fight back against militant secularists, cultural polluters, gay activists and Hollywood indoctrinators. The conference will be the start of a year-long Christian voter registration, education and mobilization effort.” The struggles of his audience (fighting the enemies who brought the nation to the current circumstances) will bring successes (a nation redeemed and filled with educated Christian voters).

While Scarborough’s newsletter and the Repent America press release employed similar strategies and comparably victimized citizens of New Orleans, Scarborough expanded the scope of blame to include the entire United States. For Scarborough, the citizens of New Orleans were representative of the rest of the nation and were punished for the nation’s sins, as well as their own.

### **“Surely God is mad at America”**

The third text, a speech given by New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin on January 17, 2006, takes an entirely different take on the post-Katrina situation. While Nagin still claims that the hurricane was God's work, he gives different reasons for the “punishment.” Nagin's speech is also different from the other texts in that it was a campaign speech given months after the hurricane. Additionally, Nagin delivered the speech at a celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday.

Nagin established a common identity with his largely African American audience through a discussion of Dr. King. He goes beyond talking about King, however, and instead insists that as he prepared his speech he spoke “directly to King.” He uses this rhetorical device throughout the speech, giving King's alleged responses to a variety of issues that Nagin claimed

the community was facing. Through this strategy he defines the current circumstances, creates a common enemy, and predicts future struggles and successes.

First, in defining the current circumstances, Nagin states, “I just wanted to know what would [King] think if he looked down today at this celebration. What would he think about Katrina? . . . And he said, ‘I wouldn't like that.’” By referencing an individual who the audience most likely respected, Nagin describes the situation negatively. He continues, “Then I asked him to analyze the state of black America and black New Orleans today and to give me a critique of black leadership today. And I asked him what does he think about black leaders always or most of the time tearing each other down publicly for the delight of many? And he said, ‘I really don't like that either.’” Through these examples, he defines the problem as twofold: first, the overt destruction brought by the hurricane; second, the response of black leaders to that destruction. He then states,

And then finally, I said, “Dr. King, everybody in New Orleans is dispersed. Over 44 different states. We're debating whether we should open this or close that. We're debating whether property rights should trump everything or not. We're debating how should we rebuild one of the greatest cultural cities the world has ever seen. And yet still yesterday we have a second-line and everybody comes together from around this and that and they have a good time for the most part, and then knuckleheads pull out some guns and start firing into the crowd and they injure three people.” He said, “I definitely wouldn't like that.”

Nagin makes the case that King would define the overall situation as an unhelpful one.

Importantly, Nagin describes the situation in a way that calls for change.

Nagin uses the same rhetorical tactic of conversing with King as a way to define an enemy. He describes groups of people in New Orleans as being met by “attack dogs and machine guns firing shots over their heads” and King replies, “I wouldn't like that either.” Nagin further describes enemy figures as “racists” and “folk . . . on the other side,” seemingly referring to certain white individuals. He then proceeds to describe the larger enemy as the state and federal governments, stating, “What would [King] think about all the people who were stuck in the Superdome and Convention Center and we couldn't get the state and the federal government to come do something about it? And he said, ‘I wouldn't like that.’” He further blames the government for Katrina occurring in the first place noting, “And as we think about rebuilding New Orleans, surely God is mad at America, he’s sending hurricane after hurricane after hurricane and it's destroying and putting stress on this country. Surely, he’s not approving of us being in Iraq under false pretense.” By placing God against the enemy, Nagin places direct blame for Katrina and the failures of post-Katrina relief efforts directly on the government and other individuals defined as enemies.

While Nagin defines the government and whites as the enemy, he proposes future struggles and successes that deal only with those in black communities. He states that King said, “We as a people need to fix ourselves first . . . .” Nagin states, “We're not taking care of ourselves. We're not taking care of our women. And we're not taking care of our children when you have a community where 70 percent of its children are being born to one parent.” The struggles come with dealing with those problems. However, the eventual successes, Nagin argues, are worth the struggles. He states,

It's time for us to rebuild a New Orleans, the one that should be a chocolate New Orleans. And I don't care what people are saying Uptown or wherever they are.

This city will be chocolate at the end of the day. This city will be a majority African-American city. It's the way God wants it to be. You can't have New Orleans no other way; it wouldn't be New Orleans.

Again, Nagin clearly places God on the side of the African American communities and suggests that their successes are inevitable (as they are a part of God's vision for the city).

Nagin closes his speech by again unifying his audience around his vision for the future struggles and successes of the city. He states that King closed his conversation with Nagin by stating, "I never worried about the good people—or the bad people I should say—who were doing all the violence during civil rights time . . . I worried about the good folks that didn't say anything or didn't do anything when they knew what they had to do." He calls for his audience members to unite in dealing with problems within their communities.

In stark contrast to the Repent America press release, Nagin's speech largely absolves the citizens of New Orleans of guilt. Instead Nagin's speech is reminiscent of Scarborough's text in blaming the national government for the hurricane, albeit in very different ways.

## **Conclusion**

Through an analysis of texts produced by Repent America, Rick Scarborough, and Ray Nagin, we can see the diversity of ways in which individuals and organizations placed blame upon victims, citing "God's judgment" as the reason for Hurricane Katrina's destruction. This section further explores the differences between the texts and offers several theoretical implications.

The key difference between Nagin's speech and the two conservative responses to Katrina deals with blame. As Davis and French (2008) note, media sources often blamed victims of the hurricane for failing to appropriately deal with its destruction. This paper also points to

instances when victims were blamed for the very occurrence of Hurricane Katrina. Burke's concept of victimage is equally relevant, as the authors of each text shifted guilt to scapegoats for the hurricane's destruction. The difference between the artifacts is that the Repent America and Scarborough Report pieces blamed (or, at least, partially blamed) the victims of the hurricane for its destruction. While also invoking "God's punishment," Nagin blamed the federal and state governments, rather than the people of New Orleans.

Regardless of the specific identities of the individuals or entities blamed by the rhetors, any issue where people justify an injustice by citing religion or a higher power demands attention. Discourse drawing upon religious themes can become hegemonic because religion is so influential in many people's lives. If the goal of a rhetorician is to point out hegemonic discourse and hold rhetors accountable then special attention should be paid to religious texts. In particular, the conservative Christian texts are guilty of justifying the destruction of an entire city based upon the supposed sins of certain groups and individuals. One component of rhetorical criticism should be to point out the ways that this type of discourse might affect these communities.

The LGBT community was one group clearly called out by both Scarborough and Repent America. Discourse blaming this community reinforces notions of hegemonic masculinity, which Connell (1990) defines as "the culturally idealized form of masculine character" (p. 83). Hegemonic masculinity emphasizes displays of power and force, achievement in the workplace, patriarchy, and other characteristics, while subjugating and marginalizing women and gay men (Trujillo, 1991, pp. 290-291). These texts are particularly disturbing as they promote intolerance towards the LGBT community and make an effort to deny that community a voice.

Classist and racist undertones also plagued each text, but none more so than Nagin's who overtly identified wealthy whites as part of the enemy. Nagin's speech, meant to unite his African American audience, did so by exploiting and heightening already existing racial tensions. While Nagin did not blame victims of the hurricane, he still invoked God in creating an unethical argument.

As Dyson (2007) notes, theodic discourse becomes less common as society experiences scientific advancements. However, major disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, and tornadoes still inspire extreme discourse of this nature. Highlighting the negative consequences of such rhetoric is essential to weakening its influence.

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# Myth and the Paris Commune

**Katie Brunner, MFA**

Assistant Director of Speech and Debate

Simpson College

[Katie.brunner@simpson.edu](mailto:Katie.brunner@simpson.edu)

## Abstract

*The Paris Commune of 1871 is an event in history that has had a special place in the hearts of many revolutionaries. Karl Marx called it “the first successful working class revolution”. This paper looks at the events of the Paris Commune, as recounted in a work produced 25 years after the event occurred and, by means of comparison with more recent accounts, examines how it moved from a historical “reality” to a mythic history through the lens of secondary framing and historical mythology. This approach to the Paris Commune reveals many significantly different interpretations; pointing out that the true impact of an event may lie within the effect it can have on future generations. This calls to question the relevance of factual history, particularly in the case of events from so long ago. If one was not present at the event, then the framing of any future recounts of history depends solely on the author, and therefore, can arguably be viewed as interpretation rather than fact.*

## Introduction

Over 140 years after the Paris Commune, a blogger still invokes those fateful days concluding with the words: “Long live those in whom burns the flame that never dies. Vive la Commune!” (Countercurrents, 2011). The blog, *The Seventy-Two Greatest Days In History, Remembering The Paris Commune Of 1871*, illustrates the reverence with which the author speaks of the events that occurred between March 18 and May 28 of 1871 and how The Paris Commune serves as a “a source of joy, inspiration, and pride” for subsequent revolutionary movements (Fryett, 2011, para. 10). Further research into this movement has revealed many

different interpretations of these events. In one such interpretation, Gregor Dallas (1989) painted a strikingly different portrait of The Paris Commune, referring to it as “the first incident in history of modern political terrorism and hostage-taking” (p. 38). An article in the *Los Angeles Times* refers to the Commune as a “powerful political myth” (Pfaff, 1989):

The myth of the Commune was--for the left--one of spontaneous popular organization, precocious communism, and vicious counterrevolution. Lenin's shroud was a Communard flag. For the right, the myth meant radicalism, anarchy, murder. These two myths embittered French politics for decades and contributed greatly to the ideologizing of European politics that gave the world totalitarianism. We are only now getting over it. (para. 11)

Edward Mason (1930) argued that socialists have taken the Commune from the history of France and, by means of interpretation, made it into a momentous event in socialism. Mason stated, “Marxian socialism, taking its stand on the economic interpretation of history, leads naturally to the creation of a *historical mythology*” (p. 9). Nothnagle (1989) defined historical mythology as “events, processes or persons from an earlier time which transmit religious or ideological beliefs to a certain group in an easily comprehended, emotionally moving forum” (as cited in Connelly, 2001, p. 6). The analysis of this social movement has vast implications in the areas of secondary framing and its effects on how social movements are viewed through the lenses of heroism or terrorism, depending on whose account one ascribes to. As scholars, this is relevant to all of us, as we may rely on the recounts of certain events or phenomena to conduct any research that we are pursuing. The overarching debate over the attainability of objectivity in research is something that has always intrigued me. Particularly, as a critical scholar, within the area of social movements and their ability to either inspire social action in future generations, or hinder

it, depending on the discourse surrounding the event. Due to the controversial recounts of the Commune, it is necessary to gain a more thorough understanding of The Paris Commune; look at the events of the Commune through the lens of secondary framing and historical mythology; analyze some examples of different interpretations; before finally, investigating some possible implications that this research could have in the area of social movement studies.

## **The Events of the Paris Commune**

In order to further the understanding of The Paris Commune, and examine the problems that exist with presenting one's view as objective, I attempted to focus solely on the events that occurred. The "who, what, when, where" so to speak. Therefore, for the purposes of this section, I focused on examining the events of the Commune, beginning with the major events leading up to the establishment of the Commune and ending with its downfall. As I wished to discover how these events were framed within their historical context, source material dated within 25 years of the actual occurrence of the events was used. Different interpretations of these events will be discussed in subsequent sections.

In *History of the Paris Commune 1871*, Thomas March (1896) told the story of the events surrounding the Paris Commune, and how they effected people involved. I will recount these events with the use of his voice, with an attempt to synthesize what happened within the context of this period of history. March spoke of the people of France and how they had heard rumors of the battles being waged on the German frontier in the kingdom of Prussia and "in and beyond Paris was all war-like activity: raising of troops, manufacture of arms, warehousing provisions, drilling recruits, erecting defense works" (p. 12). Poor people for miles around the city of Paris came flocking to the capitol and "the better protection its walls would afford them if the enemy came that far" (p. 12). Socialists and "internationalists" in France were not satisfied with the

lack of working-class representation within the new regime of the Government of National Defense which “was blown together by a whirlwind of popular enthusiasm” (p. 20), so they began organizing public meetings and “from the twenty committees, thus constituted a Central Committee, composed of four delegates from each committee, eighty in all” (p. 25). These were representative of working-class Parisians from every district.

As German soldiers continued to march toward Paris, National Guards within the city were greatly increased in numbers to help with the protection of the city, an action that would prove to be a main catalyst to the events that led to The Paris Commune. Meanwhile, the provisional government was experiencing numerous difficulties as a result of its fragile state; lacking the legal authority it really needed to govern the people. However, those involved knew that elections could not be held while the fighting continued. This led Adolphe Thiers, a politician and statesman with great official and diplomatic experience (March, 1896, p. 20), “to apply for an armistice, for the purpose of holding national elections and thereby placing the Government of the country upon a legal basis” (p. 35). Though the armistice was denied at this time, Thiers’s action, considering the desire of the people to defend their own country with the “utmost vigor” was considered nothing short of an act of treason. The identity of the Parisians was an important factor in the development of this movement. March emphasized this: “A Frenchman loves his country and it was impossible to be light-hearted when it was threatened” (p. 12).

These important events, coupled with the continuous siege of Paris by German forces, left Parisians “discouraged in the idea of successful defeat of their foe” (March, 1896, p. 64). The overall social condition only exacerbated the problem, as Parisians found themselves “suffering from famine, dissatisfaction and anxiety” (p. 64). The siege had lasted four months,

every effort to relieve the city had proven futile and mortality rates were sky rocketing due to “deprivation of fresh food, cold weather and the Prussian bombardment” (p. 71). This led to the final push for armistice and the election of the National representative Assembly, which had the last word on all decisions of war-time activity. The reaction of Parisians was one of outrage, as March stated “the people of Paris called the surrender ‘a monstrous trickery’, shouting for immediate arraignment of the Government” (p. 75). Nevertheless, elections were held for the National Assembly on February 8<sup>th</sup> 1871. Forty-three members were elected to the National Assembly, including Adolphe Thiers, who was elected chief of executive power.

In the wake of numerous defeats at the hands of the Prussians, the Assembly felt that ending the war was of the utmost importance. On February 26<sup>th</sup>, 1871, Thiers signed the preliminaries of peace between France and Germany. Of the numerous stipulations that Thiers agreed to, none was as appalling to Parisians as the occupation of Paris by 30,000 Prussian soldiers. “The citizens, in whom the patriotism of Frenchman was immensely augmented by the pride of being Parisians, felt keenly the humiliation which such occupation implied” (March, 1896, p. 86). Determined not to bow to their enemies, the National Guard of Paris organized the seizing of numerous cannons, moving them to specific parts of the city, namely Montmartre, which was the highest point in the city. The National Assembly was moved to Versailles and Thiers made arrangements to take decisive action against the National Guard of Paris. “He was anxious to send a force so efficient and numerous that its prestige alone would act upon the insurgent National Guard and induce them to lay down their arms” (p. 91). Thiers estimated that he would need a force of 40,000 men to accomplish this.

The decision by Thiers to attempt to disarm the Parisian National Guard is viewed by many as the official beginning of the events of The Paris Commune. On March 18, 1871, Thiers

ordered his troops to take the cannons by force. At 4 a.m., Thiers' troops of National Guard marched on Montmartre and originally had the Parisian National Guard (or the Federates, as they were now being called), caught by surprise; by 6 a.m. "Federate Guards turned out of their beds and assembled in the streets, and were also joined by numbers of women and children" (p. 102). The women appealed to Thiers' troops, bringing them food and wine and the soldiers became "friendly and affable under the influence of the kindly attention shown to them" (p. 102). The growing crowds of federates, women and children advanced on the soldiers, who were ordered to fire on the crowd. It was at this point that many of Thiers's troops "broke ranks and refused to fire" (p. 103). Several other defections happened in the same fashion throughout Montmartre, and Thiers's attempts to seize the cannons were thwarted. Two generals of Thiers' Guard, Lacomte and Clement Thomas were "disarmed, arrested and executed by frenzied citizens and federates" (p. 108). Thiers retreated to Versailles, with the troops that hadn't defected.

After the victory at Montmartre, March (1896) described the climate of governing ambiguity that shrouded Paris in the first few days before the Commune:

Thus Paris was at one stroke deprived even of the semblance of Government, and delivered openly, by a confession of weakness that was beyond contradiction, to whosoever had strength or astuteness enough to seize the dropped reigns of authority. (p. 112)

On March 19<sup>th</sup>, 1871, the Central Committee, which consisted mostly of Federate Guard members hastily chosen to stand in as leaders, announced that communal elections would be held. "It was the duty of the citizens now to elect representatives who should govern the city and establish the veritable Republic" (March, 1896, p. 118). The Central Committee urged the citizens of Paris to "choose as their representatives only men who were modest, disinterested,

actors—in contradistinction to mere spinners—sincere, honest and of kindred sympathies and positions to themselves” (p. 139). Whether or not the committee assumed or hoped this would refer to them is left to interpretation. The elections were held from 8 a.m. to midnight on March 26<sup>th</sup>. Thiers promptly spread word throughout France that the election happened “without moral authority” and was, for all intents and purposes, illegal (p. 141). He also made the promise that “order would be restored at Paris as elsewhere” (p. 141).

The Paris Commune consisted of representatives elected each of the 20 arrondissements, or districts, of Paris. One of the most notable features of the Commune was that “the bulk of them were young and many belonged to the working class” (p. 147). On March 28<sup>th</sup>, over 100,000 National Guard, federates, and citizens of Paris celebrated the inauguration of the Paris Commune, shouting “Vive la Commune!” forgetting momentarily that 100,000 Versailles troops were gathering, “whose specific mission was to neutralize and annul that day’s proceedings” (p. 151).

During their short time as the governing body of Paris, the commune enacted numerous decrees which, as March (1896) stated, “The National Assembly would have talked over for weeks, and probably then have rejected” (p. 159). These decrees were geared mainly toward two groups of people: the National Guard, who helped create the circumstances necessary for the Commune to exist, and the poor, who voted them in (p. 159). A few of these decrees included the suspension of the sale of unredeemed pledges in pawn shops and the “relieving of all rents owed by tenants, specifically during the months of October 1870 and January through April 1871” (p.160). Another decree enacted by the Commune was the complete separation of Church and State and the immediate order to nationalize all church property. This was the “beginning of the arrests, and in some cases, execution of priests, including eventually the Archbishop of Paris”



(p.164). Other decrees included pensions granted to unmarried spouses of National Guard who were killed in defense of the city and freedom of the press (p. 183). Abandoned workshops were to be given over to “workman’s cooperative societies, for their common benefit” (p. 195).

March (1896) noted that there was little time for the enactment of these measures as the majority of labor power was given over to pressing military requirements (p. 195). In the midst of attempts at these “socialistic” decrees (p. 195) one must also examine that much of this governing body was still in a state of disarray and confusion. The sheer number of decrees being enacted “caused a sense of bewilderment and unreality to pervade the minds of all citizens who were not communards” (p. 162). Crucial government systems, such as, most notably, the judicial system, were not fully functioning, leading to unlawful arrests and imprisonment without trial (p. 162). Arguably the biggest mistake, according to March (1896) was the underestimation of the threat of Versailles and the fact that they did not immediately attack after the victory at Montmartre.

Such a battle could hardly have ended in anything but victory for Parisians, but they were slow to comprehend the necessities of their unexpected success on the 18<sup>th</sup> and thus the vigilant and disciplined army at Versailles grew stronger by the day (p. 151). On April 2<sup>nd</sup>, Versailles troops began their attacks on Paris. These battles ensued for five weeks, until May 21<sup>st</sup> 1871, when the Versailles army “broke through weak barricades on the western side of the city” (p. 255). This seven-day period is referred to as bloody week or *semaine sanglante*. During this time, desperate attempts by communards to defend the city were ultimately crushed by the Versailles forces. As March (1896) described, “the defenders of the city fought bravely and tenaciously, what they lacked mostly was outside themselves—capable officering and generalship” (p. 262). In all the chaos, federates set fire to buildings and shot 52

hostages, including, as previously mentioned, the archbishop. Although specific numbers are contested depending on interpretation of the events of the final day, the ferocity with which the Versailles troops dispatched the remaining communards cannot be overlooked and “the battle became, in its last hours, even more bloody and relentless than before” (p. 335). March argued that the Versailles troops were “pitiless in their vengeance, were in the thick of massacre” (p. 339), though he also asserted it may not have been as terrible as communist recollection makes it out to be. Further retribution was carried out by the Versailles Court-Martial, “its judgments were most relentless and scores or hundreds of persons, National Guard and others, were shot by its orders, often upon the scantiest evidence” (p. 339). On the last day, 140 communards were taken to the cemetery at Pere Lachaise and lined up in groups of ten to be shot, leading later to the construction of the famous Communards’ Wall. Arrests and penalties continued even after Paris was taken by Versailles on May 28<sup>th</sup> 1871. The total number, as with many numbers in the case of these events, is left up to scrutiny; but according to a report from the National Assembly in 1875, the number of arrests totaled 36,309 (p. 347).

### **Considerations of Historical Objectivity**

It is almost impossible to recall a full history of an event such as this. Even a history as thorough and timely as the research used for this account is not without its faults. Further research into the author of this book turned up very little, so few assumptions can be made into his background and his reasoning for recalling these events the way that he does. Though at times he was rather critical of the Commune, he also chastised Thiers and the actions of the Versailles troops, so his immediate bias cannot be determined. As he willingly points out throughout the course of this book:

This instance is only one out of very many I have met with in the course of this work, where even a simple question of fact appears to be beyond the range of absolute denial or affirmation. I have not troubled the reader with details of these doubtful statements except in a few cases, trusting rather to use my own judgment and to insert that which, after considering all the circumstances known to me, appeared most likely to be true .(March, 1896, p. 144)

I would argue that history can be difficult to report objectively. When history is subject to interpretation, we must consider what is really more important to determine: the actual events that happened during the time period, or what the interpretation of these events means to people today. I have found that my own assumptions have been an important factor in how I have interpreted these events, even so far as determining why I decided to pursue this research at all. To further investigate this interpretation of historical events, it is important to delve further into the use of secondary framing and historical mythology.

## **Secondary Framing**

Goffman's (1974) notion of frames is that of "interpretive schemata that people use to identify, label, and render meaningful events in their lives" (as cited in Buechler, 2011, p. 146). Framing puts boundaries around some social phenomena, allowing people to organize experience and guide actions, both in life and social movements. What makes secondary framing so significant, especially in the study of the symbolism of significant historical social movements, such as the Paris Commune, is that the framing is being done by an actor that is outside the movement itself (usually many years later) rather than by an actor within the movement as it is happening. Therefore, I would argue that the perceived accuracy of the framing can only be determined by the reader themselves. In the case of the Paris Commune, two particular types of

framing are evident, even within the secondary frames: identity framing and master frames. Snow & Benford (1988) asserted that *identity framing* constructs collective identities by identifying protagonists (followers, allies and supporters), antagonists (enemies and opponents) and audiences (neutral bystanders). *Master frames* refers to the framing of grievances (injustice, oppression and exploitation) and solutions (justice liberation and fairness). I will explore the use of these frames in many different examples of narratives on the Paris Commune. For the purposes of this analysis, the focus will be on two specific examples. The first is an article, featured in *Against the Current*, a socialist journal produced by *Solidarity*, a magazine with strong socialist, anarchist and feminist voice. The second example is an article written in *History Today*, which was founded in 1951 and is an example of “popular history” or the “mixing of styles, genres and periods to achieve a fusion of intellectual excitement and readability” (“History Today,” n.d., para. 4). Other examples will also be used to further emphasize the stark difference in the points of view of many different authors on the recounting of the events that occurred in Paris in 1871. When analyzing the events of the Paris Commune, the writings of Karl Marx are of obvious importance. The absence of Marx’s analysis (other than second-hand citations in other sources) is acknowledged as a limitation to this research. However, I chose the following sources based on their extreme interpretive differences and also to emphasize the fact that although the Paris Commune took place over 140 years ago, it is still a relevant and symbolic social movement for many people today.

In looking at the secondary identity and master framing of the article *This is What Democracy Looks Like! Remembering the Paris Commune (Against the Current)* it is difficult not to focus on the choice of title. Mann (2011) recounted the heroic tale of the “establishment of the world’s first worker’s government” (p. 14). The use of the word *democracy* in the title

already sets up for the reader the master frame of justice and liberation. Throughout his recount of the events of the Paris Commune, he continued to use master frames in referring to the activities of the Versailles troops as “savagery” and “ferocious repression” (p. 17). Mann utilized identity frames throughout the article, framing the protagonist Commune “as an outstanding example of revolutionary working-class energy, determination and creativity” (p. 14). Also, though Mann acknowledged that there were “programmatic weaknesses within the leadership of the Commune” (p. 17), far more emphasis is placed on the social measures it enacted and the fact that, as Marx (1871) stated, it was “was essentially a working class government, the product of the struggle of the producing classes against the appropriating class” (as cited in Mann, 2011, p. 16). One striking secondary frame, arguably a mixture of identity and master framing is how Mann describes the bloody week. The emphasis on the savage slaughter of the communards builds the master frame of oppression and the antagonistic frame of Thiers’ troops. Lastly, as previously stated, the number of deaths the Commune suffered during bloody week is of great debate, with many, sources, including this one, stating as many as 30,000 were killed in the battle and the summary executions that followed (p. 17). Another example in which secondary framing is used to commemorate the first successful working-class revolution, as Marx often referred to it, is that of Edwards (2007), who utilized identity framing in the vilification of Adolphe Thiers. Edwards included quotations of Thiers referring to the communards as “wretched” people to be dispatched. He also strongly emphasized the positive social measures enacted by the Commune. These examples give readers a hint of the of the emotion and dedication felt by those who identify as socialist, anarchist in regard to the events of The Paris Commune. To them, it was a shining symbol of justice and revolution, squashed by

the ruling class. However, this contrasts sharply with the second example I analyzed, which produced a very intriguing relationship comparison

In the second example, *An Exercise in Terror? The Paris Commune (History Today)*, Dallas (1989), described a far different look at the events of the Commune. Again, the title in itself is an example of master framing, with the social and political implications attached to the word *terrorism*. Continuing with master frames, Dallas referred to the events of the Commune as “cycles of violence” and the “first incident in history of modern political terrorism and hostage taking” (p. 38). The focus on the events surrounding the capture and execution of priests and the archbishop, served as an identity frame vilifying the Communards. This example takes identity framing even further by framing the audience (innocent bystanders) of the hostages. This article framed the actions of the Commune very differently as well, highlighting the chaos and disarray by stating “at least five political bodies could have claimed to be government” (p. 39). Serman (1871) echoed this sentiment, calling it “tragic anarchy that limited its work to pinhole realizations and illusory statements of principle” (as cited in Archer, 1987). Dallas made very little mention of the social measures enacted by the Commune, except to highlight the separation of church and state in reference to the hostages (p. 41). He even went so far as to frame the Communards as cowards, stating that when Thiers attacked, many of them fled to their own districts and changed into civilian clothes (p. 44). Though Dallas acknowledged the “reprisals” against the Commune, even giving a range of numbers between 20,000 and 30,000, it was only briefly in the last two paragraphs. As with the first example, the number of Communards killed during “Bloody Week” varies greatly. The Encyclopedia Britannica cited numbers as low as 18,000 (“Commune of Paris”, para. 6). Tombs (2012) estimated the number to be as low as 12,000 (p. 682). These numbers are incredibly significant when it comes to recounting the tale

of the Paris Commune of 1871. It is this event in history that, as Marx stated, “has always had a special place in the hearts and minds of revolutionaries, and can inspire today’s activist generation with the potential for ‘power to the people’” (Mann, 2011, p. 14). Therefore, it is imperative to gain a thorough understanding of historical mythology, and the effects it can have on the symbolic impact of future movements.

## **Historical Mythology and Future Implications**

As previously stated, Nothnagle (1989) described historical myths as “events processes or persons from an earlier time, which transmit religious or ideological belief to a specified group in an easily comprehended, emotionally moving forum” (as cited in Connelly, 2001, p. 6). When considering the significance of the Paris Commune, one must consider the effect on the socialist movement itself. Regardless of what one might think is true or false, the narratives on marxist.org are among the first results to appear when one searches for information on the Commune. The Paris Commune is very significant to those within the socialist movement as is evidenced by the fact that people still visit the cemetery at Pere Lachaise on the March 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the mere fact that this event is of such importance that it would still be written and debated about over 140 years after it happened. Edward S. Mason illustrated the importance of, not so much the events of the Paris Commune, but the narratives written about it and what they have meant to the people who adhere to them. “It has made its contribution to the socialist calendar of saints and has embellished socialist mythology with many a dramatic episode” (Mason, 1930, p. 296). Mason cited Engels’ remarks, “the anniversary of the Paris Commune became the first general holiday for the entire proletariat” (p. 297). He argued that socialists have, in a sense, taken the Commune as their own, making it one of the most important of all battles in the war between bourgeois and proletariat (p. 297), calling to mind class consciousness

and revolutionary urgency. Mason also described the effects of bloody week on European socialism, stating some even called it the worst day of their lives. The overall meaning of the Commune to socialists was that of “widespread revolution that was made by workers in the interest of the oppressed” (p. 299). These ideals are definitely evident in socialist writings on the Commune, including the example from *Against the Current* previously mentioned. It is also worth mentioning, however, that some manner of the same strategies may be utilized by those articles portraying the Commune negatively. Mann (2011) described “reaction and historical memory” after the fall of the commune:

The forces of reaction in France worked hard to portray the communards as a dangerous, depraved cosmopolitan threat to civilization itself, a group that was perhaps not quite human, an image designed to suggest that its brutal repression was just, even necessary (p. 17).

The implications of the construction of historical mythologies and their impacts on certain groups are two-fold: increased motivational persuasive rhetoric and increased distrust for those with opposing viewpoints. As is evident in the examples which hold the Commune in high regard, the call for people to remember the glory and sacrifice of the Paris Commune could be used with the right rhetorical tactics as a call to action. As I mentioned earlier, it is impossible to remove my own assumptions about the event and how they have affected the research that I am conducting. As I am very interested in the power of social movement rhetoric, it was difficult to try and write without including my own voice, which identifies with the working-class Communards. I believe that this illustrates the power of historical social movements on current social action research. The fact that the majority of information on this event is second-hand (or even third or fourth hand at this point) really only strengthens the persuasive opportunities for



this message, as people will feel less inclined to feel dissonance about a message if it really can't be *known* what the truth actually entails. The second implication is increased distrust in opposition. As can be seen in the above quotation, those in support of the events of the Paris Commune see the truth as being twisted and warped to justify the atrocities that went on at the hands of the Versailles troops; a convenient cover-up by those ruling forces that crushed the Commune in the first place. This exemplifies significant distrust of the authority figures in power at the time of these event, and could arguably the same distrust could be displaced upon those authors whose viewpoints differ from their own.

## Conclusion

Ultimately, the truth of what happened in Paris between March 18<sup>th</sup> and May 28<sup>th</sup>, 1871 cannot be fully comprehended unless one was there to witness it themselves, and considering the average human lifespan is not generally 140 years, secondary framing and historical mythologies will continue to permeate this event and those who believe strongly in it. A historical event can be “revolutionary justice” for some, and “tragic anarchy” for others, depending on whose research one is looking at. Comparing the interpretive examples on either side showed drastic differences in language, description and presentation of “facts”. The historical mythology that frames the Paris Commune for socialists is that of working-class solidarity and, as previously mentioned, could be a feasible call to action. However, whether or not this event is used as a catalyst for social action within these groups is a subject for further research within the areas of group communication and protest rhetoric. The significance of this examination is in the assertion that history, especially historically significant events that are centuries old, are fluid and should be subject to interpretation. Therefore, context and the ideological stance of an author must always be considered when researching historical “facts” in our academic world.

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# Steve Jobs' use of Ethos for Persuasive Success in His 2005 Stanford Commencement Address

**Keith Bistodeau**

Graduate Teaching Assistant/Forensics  
Ohio University  
[kb626413@ohio.edu](mailto:kb626413@ohio.edu)

## Abstract

*The use of ethos in persuasive settings has always been a powerful tool in public speaking, especially by those in power and in businesses. Kenneth Burke's Pentad plays a primary role in persuasive situations, particularly when we as scholars try to dissect and understand specific aspects of a speech situation. In this essay I used Burke's Pentad as a framework to explore Steve Jobs' use of, as I term it, "internal and external ethos" as not only a persuasive mechanism, but also as a force to build his persona/mythological legacy.*

## Introduction

The college commencement ceremony stands as a time-honored tradition in the United States. It represents not only the end of college but also the beginning of a career and what most consider the entrance into the "real world". The commencement speaker represents a piece of the philosophy of the University, and this speaker is trusted with delivery a parting message to the graduates, their friends and family, and all of those who are listening to carry with them for the rest of their lives. Jobs' persona in society and within his 2005 Stanford commencement address is worthy of analysis due to his connection to this collegiate audience. Jobs had "god-man" status within society, an individual who never graduated college, but created one of the biggest companies the world has ever seen.

While Ellen DeGeneres, Andy Sandburg, Bill Gates, Donald Trump and many other high profile individuals have been asked to give commencement speeches just like Jobs', this

generation of college students, and many in society viewed Jobs as an individual with a kind of Horatio Alger mythos, with his stories and conversations to the public about being a self-made man who dropped out of college. Colleges look to have individuals give commencement speeches that allow the audience(s) to identify with the speaker's personal story, since part of the goal of this significant event (commencement) is to create a lasting impression and connection to the university, while also symbolizing a new beginning for the graduates.

With the significance placed on this singular event by most in our culture, with it signifying an end of a part of life, while also signifying the beginning of another, I chose to analyze the 2005 Stanford commencement address given by Steve Jobs. I used methods of Burkean analysis, primarily using aspects of the pentad to deconstruct Jobs' speech to better understand the distinctions between internal and external ethos, and the role they play in persona creation. While we often discuss ethos as a meta construct, I argue that it has two separate areas. Internal ethos is the ethos that is created within a speech act, and is contained within the act itself. External ethos is all of the aspects of our world that exist outside of the speech act being investigated that can impact the creation and events within the act. A simple way of looking at this is in Jobs' life itself, and how that life shaped the persona he created in his speech.

Jobs was an influential man in his time in the field of technology, but from an academic success standpoint was not an overly educated man, as he was in fact, a college dropout. His success outside the world of academics is what led him to speak on this occasion, as he helped to revolutionize not only technology but education and the world as we know it. In life Jobs impacted education with his inventions and talks, and his openness of his frailty before his death removed the veil of "god-like" status that surrounded him in life, allowing those exposed to his speeches message to connect with it on a more personal level. Even in the moments leading up to

his untimely death Jobs presented a strong and confident persona, even though his body was deteriorating. Jobs became open with the public about his condition in the last year of his life, letting us see his physical struggle unfold before us, but even in these hardest times, he presented himself as the strong and self-made man he had for his entire career.

Through analysis we will gain a better understanding of how Jobs uses his success/standing on a deeper level as an ethos (external and internal) appeal to convince the audience to pursue their dreams. This essay applies constructs from Bitzer, Burke, and Campbell and Burkholder's ideas on rhetorical criticism. Specifically this essay use Burke's Pentad as the primary framework for analysis. As Bitzer's idea on rhetorical discourse articulate, "rhetorical discourse is called into existence by situation; the situation which the rhetor perceives amounts to an invitation to create and present discourse" (Bitzer, 1968), and that is due to the dramatic aspects of the situation. Since the pentad is tied to dramatism, and the commencement speaking situation is like a theatrical performance, the persona is enacted within the speaking situation. Through Burke's pentad, which are reinforced by Campbell and Burkholder's framework and Bitzer's ideas on rhetorical discourse this essay explore specific aspects of Jobs' speech in order to gain a deeper textual and contextual understanding of how Jobs constructed his persona in this speech in order to connect to his audience. This essay will specifically focus on the five areas of Burke's pentad: Act, Agent, Agency, Scene and Purpose. Campbell and Burkholder note, "The discipline of rhetoric is the study of symbolic attempts by humans to make order of their world, to discover who they are, and to interact with others in ways that make their lives more satisfying" (1996, p. 14), and it is in this regard that I look at the specifics of Jobs' 2005 Stanford commencement address.

## Review of Literature

When looking at the commencement speech Jobs gave at Stanford in 2005 it is easy to see that the structure and content of the speech (Jobs' persona) was shaped by the external ethos Jobs brought to the situation. The use of the persona as a strategy to create a speaker's rhetoric has been explored by many scholars, (Carpenter; 1994; Snow, 1985; Ware and Linkugel, 1982; Zulick, 1992). When speakers utilize different strategies of persona creation they "an assumed character" (Ware & Linkugel, 1982, p. 50) in order to build authority and invoke a connection of their audience. Bitzer (1968) argued rhetoric is a response to a situation. By agreeing with this idea a researcher must consider the ideas of both internal and external ethos, since a speech hinges on the context of meaning in which the speech is located. If Jobs' speech was created in a response to the situation (a commencement ceremony near the time of his impending death), the persona Jobs had in the global community and the way he created that persona would have an impact on how he created his persona within the commencement speech.

Since Jobs' speech falls into the epideictic type, which Aristotle argues (as cited in Roberts, 2004, p. 13), "the ceremonial orator is, properly speaking, concerned with the present, since all men praise or blame in view of the state of things existing at the time, though they often find it useful also to recall the past and to make guesses at the future". Internal ethos is contained within the situation in which a speech is given, but as Bitzer states, a speaker's external ethos is their stance and individual understanding from outside the confines of the speaking situation in which a speech act occurs. Meaning, that speakers often look to their past and their experiences to make guess and speak towards the future. This would mean that Jobs' would have drawn upon his external persona and ethos to create the internal persona and ethos in the speech and invite the audience into the "performance" of the rhetorical situation.

This dual construction of ethos is a unique aspect of the scene created by a commencement speech. The genre of commencement speeches is uniquely different than other speeches in regards to the typical structures used, which can be understood more clearly using Kenneth Burke's pentad as the lens for analysis. The five key areas of the pentad are: the Act- what is occurring/what happened, the Scene- where the act is happening and what is the background of the situation, the Agent- who is involved in the action and what role are they playing, the Agency- how do the agent (s) act and by what means do they act, and the Purpose- why do the agents act, and what do they want. By using his outside stance from his professional and personal life Jobs pulls his ideas and public stance into his speech, providing a solid ground and framework to build his speech and internal ethos around the context of the speaking situation.

Jobs' speech reflects the typical structure that is common in our American society from a commencement speaker during a commencement speech (the Act). He uses the method of, as I term it, "motivational story" (the Agency), as the structure for his speech, using different story themes/types in order to create a grand message for the speech that the audience can articulate and relate to within the scene of the speech. This structure hits on the combination of the five aspects of the pentad almost directly, and also reinforces Burke's ideas presented in his 1945 book, *A Grammar of Motives*, where he sought to formulate the basic strategies people employ in communication situations. Jobs used many different strategies within his speech to connect his ideas to his audience and he does this first by setting the scene for his speech and then he gives us an overview of the three areas of his speech, and finishes with a strong take-away point for the audience. This is not scene in the Burkean sense, but the general idea of scene. He did this first by acknowledging the situation, and also addressing his own connection to the situation. "I'm



honored to be here with you today. I never graduated. This is the closest I've been to a college graduation" (Jobs, 2005). While this may seem like an interesting thing to say to start a speech at a college graduation, Jobs does so in a direct manner that helps to create his persona in this commencement speech. Many speakers address their qualifications to give the speech, almost in a way that brings them down to the level of the audience rather than portraying themselves as someone who is disconnected or better than those who the speaker is addressing.

This is very similar to how past famous individuals have persuaded audiences, such as Lincoln, Edison, Aristotle, Kennedy. If we think back to ideas of the American mythic hero, Jobs embodies this character type in his speech. He is a self-made man, a self-taught genius who did not need schools or institutions to support him. He achieved through his own genius and hard work and through the great American work ethic. He was a rebel within his own field; a high school dropout who started a multi-billion dollar Fortune 500 company in a garage with two thousand dollars his grandmother gave him. The stories Jobs tells in his speech echo this idea of the American mythic hero and icon, with a beginning, middle and end to his life and success, just as there is a beginning, middle and end in the life of the mythic hero.

The three stories Jobs tells in his speech are about connecting the dots (how he learned how every action/event in life is connected), love and loss (how he found love and lost things/people close to him), and death (where Jobs discusses his own battle with cancer and the fear of dying). Connecting the dots is focused on piecing the many aspects we experience in life together in order to better understand what we want to do with our lives. "You can only connect the dots looking back, not forwards. You just have to trust that they will connect" (Jobs, 2005). His second story of love and loss, reminds the audience that to succeed and get the most out of life you have to love what you do and not settle for less. "Only way to do great work is love what

you do. If you haven't found it, keep looking. Don't settle" (Jobs, 2005). This link is very clearly presented by Jobs as he called upon ideas and experiences that many people in the audience of this rhetorical situation can relate to in their own lives, having experienced it themselves, allowing them to draw their own connections to Jobs' speech. His last story, on death, stresses the idea that you must make the most with the time you have. If challenges arise or time may be short you must push through those tough times and do what you need to do for your life. "Time is limited; don't waste it living someone else's life. Follow your intuition" (Jobs, 2005). The cultural understanding and fear of death is well-known in the United States, and Jobs' plays on these ideas by using his on frailty, and the talks surrounding his battle with cancer to pull the audience into this story, showing that all of us must face death at some point in our lives, but it is how we face it that shows who we are.

The last key part of Jobs' speech is the ending, where he addresses his approach to life, that he stresses as the focus of his life and his career. He goes about addressing this idea by talking about the *Whole Earth Catalogue*, a book he use for a reference/springboard when preparing this speech, which had the farewell, "Stay hungry, stay foolish" Jobs explained that he always wished for this in his life, because if one always stays hungry and passionate to grow and develop in their career and as a person they will never be unsatisfied with where their life is going. We also must stay foolish as Jobs articulates in his speech, because if we take life to seriously we cannot enjoy the beauty that is our life.

Jobs' commencement address to Stanford University is a clear structure used for a commencement address in our western culture. Many other famous individuals used a similar structure and approach to their commencement speeches. Stephen Colbert, Anderson Cooper, Denzel Washington, Conan O'Brien, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Meryl Streep and John Stewart all

used very similar structures to connect to their audience. He sets the scene, tells stories that are personal but also relatable to the audience, and ends with a clear and motivational message by setting a period in the ceremony to invite the audience into the message of his speech. As Toye (2013) explains, “Language is a kind of ideological fingerprint which-if only we know how to interpret it- gives its author away, even as he or she attempts to dissemble. This speech is the second most viewed and commented on commencement speech on YouTube, only behind David Foster Wallace’s, “This Is Water” address at Kenyon. While some of the things Jobs said in his speech are a little non-traditional they still follow the standard motivational structure of an inspirational commencement address.

### **Analysis**

The pentadic analysis of Jobs’ speech includes constructs from Kenneth Burke’s dramatic pentad, in terms of persuasion and use of ethos, and coding for those persuasive strategies within Jobs’ speech. This analysis looks for the five aspects of the pentad: Act, Agent, Agency, Scene, and Purpose. Coding those strategies and perspectives allows for a very in-depth critique and understanding of the impact of Jobs’ ethos in his speech. By coding in this manner the balance of the different aspects of the pentad can be discerned, which allows the different aspects of ethos to be investigated, to see the role internal and external ethos play in the creation of these aspects of the pentad within the speech. This will also allow insight into which strategies are most common in Jobs’ speech and allow us to see the different methods and constructs can be used for our analysis.

The coding system examined where Jobs specifically addressed concepts in his speech that could fall into these five areas of strategies. To sort the speech into these specific areas I printed out six copies of the script and labeled each main concept (Act, Agent, Agency, Scene,

and Purpose) separately on five of the copies and used the sixth as a clean master copy. This allowed me to see all five aspects laid out next of each other in a visual/spatial manner. The goal of this method was to try and see if there was a balance of the five concepts, or if one method was disproportionally used compared to the others over the other. The aspects of act and agent exist at almost three times the occurrence rate as the aspects of scene and purpose, while act and agent exist in Jobs' speech at an occurrence rate of twice as much as that of agency. This large proportion of the speech revolving around act and agent reflects the primary focus of Jobs for his speech. These five overarching categories were used because they were present throughout the speech, and led to a more in-depth analysis once I started the coding process, allowing the sub areas to branch off and crystalize the information in the broader areas.

This was considered in terms of ethos, as ethos was the strongest aspect of Jobs' speech from the Aristotelian ideas of ethos, pathos and logos, which are the primary starting point for most speech criticisms. These in-depth categories allow for a more detailed breakdown of the speech to see how Jobs approaches the speech in terms of his ethos by understanding ethos in terms of the parts that make it up in the speech. This should add to our understanding of new findings and explanations of external ethos' role in shaping and impacting the persuasive nature of a speech.

### ***Agent***

The role that the rhetor takes in a speech is vitally important to the impact of the message they are trying to convey. Campbell and Burkholder state, "an actor assumes a role or character in a play" (1996, p. 21). The role that Jobs takes (his persona) in the speech is one of an individual of experience, but also of one who experienced failure and personal trials before achieving success. "I never graduated from college. Truth be told, this is the closest I've ever

gotten to a college graduation” (Jobs, 2005). This line is at the very beginning of Jobs’ speech and sets a very different tone for the speech than is common in commencement speeches. Most of the time commencement speeches are cheerful and full of stories of success and accomplishment, or reflect a similar structure to the way Jobs’ constructed his speech, starting out with a failure, and then addressing the challenges he faced to overcome that failure and reach greatness. Jobs was a man who without formal education of family wealth who went on to become an American and global icon.

In taking this humble stance, Jobs sets himself up to be a common man, one who is not above the group, yet he is a man who went on to do great things with his life, and explains this to the audience by giving a short version of his life story. He explains his struggle to identify with the educational system on his quest to figure out what he wanted to do with his life. This is a similar situation to the one the students are in, with looming debt and an uncertain future are things they are facing. This future beyond college is something Jobs can tap into with his speech, to create an even stronger connection with the audience. This method adds to Jobs’ ethos and credibility as a speaker for this occasion because it allows the audience to see him in their shoes, as a young adult facing a crossroad in life. While Jobs did not graduate from college, college graduates are at a similar crossroad in their own lives trying to figure out what they are going to do with their lives. This stance directly draws on the external ethos that Jobs has coming into the speech, since he is pulling from his own personal and professional life to shape and present his message and persona in the speech.

His word choice throughout the speech also reflects this idea. He does not use much jargon or specific terminology, but speaks in a very common tone and style and is very conversational with his stories, a common trait of commencement speeches. His three stories; on

connecting the dots, on love and loss, and on death are told in a manner that allows the audience to join him in each story and experience the emotional and personal struggles he experienced in each. Jobs seems to be using these stories as a means to express his past and experiences and persuade the students, that while one may experience struggles and moments of self-doubt in their lives, success is still possible.

By considering external ethos in this situation it is easier to see how it shapes Jobs persona. If external ethos is removed from consideration of persona, the impact and connection of the stories and messages within Jobs' speech are nowhere near as strong, since the internal ethos is only created within the limited space (the duration) of the speech. This means that the external ethos Jobs brings to the situation makes the speech not only more personal for Jobs, but also more connected in the message and personal nature of his stories and understanding of the importance of the situation, meaning that he uses his ethos from outside of the rhetorical situation of the speech to frame and create his internal ethos within the speech. This means that his internal ethos is shaped by his external ethos.

### *Act*

The second area of Jobs' commencement speech is the act. Campbell and Burkholder argue that, "Empowering an audience is just one form of a larger process of creating ones audience- that is, of symbolically transforming those addressed into the people the rhetor wants them to be," (Campbell & Burkholder, 1996, p. 23). Jobs does this in his speech by inviting the audience to identify with his experiences, thus giving them power to relate and identify with him as a speaker and a person which allows them to draw their own opinions about his life as well as their own. This allows the act of commencement to be an engaging and connecting act for both Jobs and his audience(s).

The venue of a commencement speech is designed, in such, that the individual who is speaking is placed at the forefront of the audience's attention, therefore pulling their attention to the speaker and making them a part of the speech itself. When Jobs starts to discuss his personal life in stories two and three, the audience is transformed into a simulated close group for Jobs, allowing him to connect with them on a deeper level, adding impact to his message. The unique aspect of audience in a commencement speech is two-fold; how the speaker views audience, and how the audience views their role in the situation.

While a speaker can only control their view and understanding of the audience(s) in the speech act, the external ethos of the speaker helps the speaker to connect more to the audience, regardless of the understanding the audience(s) has of the rhetorical situation created by the speech. External ethos creates a deeper connection between the speaker and the audience(s) since external ethos shapes the speaker's understanding of the audience's role within the situation to a more concrete level, which makes it easier for the audience to connect more to the speaker as well, since they also bring in their external experiences and understanding to the situation as well (Bitzer, 1968).

### ***Agency***

This leads us to the agency of Jobs' speech, and idea closely related to the structure of the speech, an aspect of the speech that Campbell and Burkholder explain is "the form of the discourse, the method by which it unfolds, and the nature of its movement" (Campbell & Burkholder, 1996, p. 24). The nature of Jobs' speech is told in a story format that allows him to show the progression of his life, just like a person would share a story or experience with a close-knit group of friends. "I really didn't know what to do for a few months. I felt that I had let the previous generation of entrepreneurs down - that I had dropped the baton as it was being passed

to me” (Jobs, 2005). Using these stories as a means of agency, shapes how the audience views Jobs in this speech.

This type of structure and discourse creates a certain feeling of expectation within the audience, promoting the idea of vulnerability, but also the success that can come from it, which Jobs addresses later on in his speech. “I didn’t see it then, but it turned out that getting fired from Apple was the best thing that could have ever happened to me. The heaviness of being successful was replaced by .... creative periods of my life,” (Jobs, 2005). This structure reinforces the shaped audience and persona that Jobs puts forth starting from the very beginning of his speech.

The reason Jobs is able to do all of this is due to the agency granted to him by the audience during his speech. The audience needs to grant Jobs their agency to act upon and engage in the messages within Jobs speech. Without the audience engaging in this aspect of the speech situation, the messages within Jobs speech do not exist beyond the commencement speech itself. It is Jobs’ persona, and the experiences he shares within his speech with the audience that allows the audience to decide if they want to lend their agency to Jobs, which in turn allows the messages to become ideas that become a connection between Jobs and the audience.

The experiences that Jobs had outside of this situation before coming into this situation has a large impact on how he structures the speech, which is also shaped by his external ethos, since his standing outside the situation and the way he normally presents himself and his ideas become reflected in how he structures the commencement address. Jobs uses this concept as a central part of the construction of his message and stories within his speech as they are all based upon and reflective of not only human communication but of the expected structure of a commencement speech.



## *Scene*

There seem to be two key areas for us to consider in regards to Burke's aspect of scene in Jobs' 2005 Stanford Commencement address. As Campbell and Burkholder explain "We must know about the particular events that motivated the rhetor to engage in rhetorical action and also the particular occasion, which may entail audience expectations about the function of an act and about what choices are appropriate for it" (Campbell & Burkholder, 1996, pp. 51-52). The two events that seem to really shape this speech are Jobs' life story as it unfolds in the speech, and the situation of the commencement itself.

Jobs' life story is not an easy one to follow, or for that matter, one for him to tell. There are specific instances in his life that seemed to push him beyond his comfort level and to cause him to push himself further. To establish the scene of commencement in the manner that allows Jobs to create the scene needed for his messages to have the biggest impact relies on Jobs fully committing to his message. Dropping out of college, being fired from a company he helped to create, being diagnosed with cancer, these and all of his other experiences not addressed in this speech help to shape his view on the world and, in turn, his view on how he wanted to present this commencement speech. Without those experiences, these key aspects of his life that in turn shaped who he became, which lead to his success, he may not have been given the opportunity to give this speech in the first place.

Most commencement ceremonies occur as a celebration of achievement, in front of family and friends somewhere on the university's campus. These situations are a time to reflect on the accomplishments of the students, what they have learned, and the next step they are taking in life. Most speeches given at these ceremonies are motivational and emotionally moving, helping the students feel that they are prepared to take this next step in life.

When considering this, it is easy to see that while Jobs' speech does contain some of these aspects, it challenges them as well. Roughly half of his speech is spent talking about his hardships and failures (all three of his stories are about hard times he experienced, and these are the bulk of his speech), and only the last two paragraphs are fully devoted to a motivational message. That message is quite simple, and came from a very interesting place:

"It was the mid-1970s, and I was your age. On the back cover of their final issue was a photograph of an early morning country road, the kind you might find yourself hitchhiking on if you were so adventurous. Beneath it were the words: "Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish." It was their farewell message as they signed off. Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish. And I have always wished that for myself. And now, as you graduate to begin anew, I wish that for you," (Jobs, 2005).

Yet this in itself may be the true showing of Jobs conforming to the norm of a commencement speech, to end with simple and motivational words, which is exactly what he did to finish his speech.

Bitzer expands on this idea by explaining that, "rhetorical works belong to the class of things which obtain their character from the circumstances of the historical context in which they occur" (Bitzer, 1968). Meaning that a work is rhetorical because it is a response to a situation of a certain kind, and since Jobs is placed into this situation the rhetorical discourse and the ethos that results from it stems from the external factors that allow the internal structure and impact of his speech to occur. Since the speech can only occur due to Jobs being invited by Stanford to speak in the given situation, the situational activity of his commencement speech allows Jobs ethos to grow and build upon his externally created ethos from his career and life to be the starting point of his ethos, which is built upon during his speech.

## ***Purpose***

The last area we will examine is the purpose of Jobs' speech and how that impacts the effectiveness of his message. To fully address this section we must gather "Information about those exposed to the discourse, the empirical audience and those specifically targeted by the rhetor" (Campbell & Burkholder, 1996, p. 53-54). One might question why so much focus is being placed on the audience in this analysis, but without an audience, one cannot evaluate the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the message being presented/conveyed by the rhetor, and if Jobs truly achieved the purpose of his speech for himself and for Stanford University.

The audience can be broken down into three key groups, the students, the family members of the students, and the representatives of the university in attendance of the commencement ceremony. Jobs aimed his message primarily at the students with his speech, sharing his views and opinions with them through story, but the message was not just received and interpreted by the primary intended audience. All those exposed to the message were impacted by it in one way or another; regardless of intention Jobs did affect all those who heard his speech in some way.

Since the students are the ones for whom the ceremony is held, the commencement speaker traditionally designs their speech and the core message towards them. Jobs does this by weaving his three stories into an almost lesson-based talk, with the key focus being on never losing sight of your dreams and your passions regardless of what happens to you. "Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition," (Jobs, 2005). In doing so he invites the students into his rhetoric, allows him to connect with them on a deeper level while also allowing the students to draw comparisons to their own lives and career aspirations.

The family members of the students were the secondary audience of the speech. Since the audience of a commencement ceremony is normally comprised of friends and family of those graduating, they, too, are exposed to Jobs' message. While they are not the direct audience being addressed there are still aspects of his speech that invite them into the rhetoric as well, and cause them to become a part of the situation. "Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma — which is living with the results of other people's thinking," (Jobs, 2005). While this is aimed at the students, the secondary audience can identify with this idea as well, since they are already living in the career world, and have most likely experienced some of the trials and challenges Jobs has experienced, which allows them to identify with this message on a deeper level.

Our last group to examine would be those who were at the commencement representing the university, such as the president, professors, administration, etc. These are the people responsible for this event happening. They are the ones who educated the students, set up the event, and talked Jobs into speaking at the commencement. Without this last group this situation could not occur, and in turn they are impacted by Jobs' words, (Campbell & Burkholder, 1996). What he is saying is a reflective view on the educational values and insights of the educational community of Stanford. Since he is speaking on behalf of Stanford, those that work and represent the institution at this commencement ceremony become a part of his message, as they are the living and breathing representation of how it became possible. They represent the body of education that he left to pursue his dreams, the body that gave him specific aspects to help create the inventions he did, and the body that helped to produce the people who did and could become his colleagues.

For all three of these audiences the way in which Jobs combines both the internal ethos created within the speech's rhetorical situation and the external ethos that Jobs brought into the speech situation gives a two-pronged method of connection between the audience and the speaker as well as between the audience and the speaker's message(s). Since it has been established at this point in the paper that internal ethos builds upon the external ethos that is brought into the situation by the speaker, the audience(s), and everyone involved in the rhetorical situation, it is safe to assert that internal ethos in a rhetorical situation is dependent and also an extension of the external ethos of all participants. This not only clears up the ideas and understandings that we have of contextual audiences, but also frames them in a clearer light within the rhetorical situation that they are created within and also exist within..

## Discussion

In every communicative presentation there are results that are the goal of the speaker and there is also unintended results as well. A similar situation occurs when an individual analyzes a particular speech, as there are contributing factors to the manner by which they do their analysis. In terms of Jobs' speech there are two very clear intended outcomes, and one clear unintended outcome.

The first intended outcome is the motivational shift that occurred in those receiving the message, primarily the students in the audience. Since the focus of a commencement address is on those who are finishing their time at a particular institution, in this case Stanford University, the primary outcome for a speaker should revolve around those students. The focus on audience and structure is key for Jobs' ethos in order to connect to the students.

When I say Jobs' ethos I mean both his internal and external ethos. The internal ethos of the speech is co-created by the audience in the speech act, which causes the motivational shift for

the audience to receive Jobs' message. Jobs' external ethos sets the groundwork for the shift to occur since Jobs' understanding of the situation and how he wants to approach motivating the students in the speech act through story based upon his personal and professional life that exist outside the created rhetorical situation of the speech.

Jobs understood the amount of importance the audience(s) placed on this occasion and structured his speech according to those expectations and also to what he wanted to convey about his own persona in his speech. By framing the three main stories of his speech in the order he did Jobs was able to tell a narrative story about himself and shape his persona for the audience. This allows him to let the structure of the stories to connect to the audience which allows him to motivate and persuade them using ethos. This can only occur and be effective when all three of these constructs build off of one another to create a strong ethos for a speaker, which Jobs did in his speech. Similar analysis could be done of other commencement speeches to check for these same trends, or to see if Jobs' methods are a unique occurrence.

The second intended outcome was the positive reflection on Stanford University as a result of the speech. This echoes the ideas of not only persona for Stanford but also the historical-cultural aspects of the commencement ceremony and of the university. The university has its own identity and history that was well established before Jobs gave this speech in 2005. As a result, Jobs needed to consider the image of Stanford and what the expectations were of him as a representative of the university while he was preparing, writing and giving his speech. As a result, his persona and internal ethos were created in a manner that allowed him to meet all of his own personal goals while also representing Stanford in a positive light.

All public figures/entities try to keep themselves in the best light possible, and that is easy to do when the people speaking on your behalf are from within your organization or the

individual is speaking for themselves. This idea drastically changes when you bring someone in to speak to members of your organization or on behalf of your organization. Jobs just happened to be doing both for this commencement speech. Jobs draws in the external ethos of himself and Stanford into the speech to help create and establish internal ethos within the speech situation.

Since Stanford also has their own external ethos that adds to the shaping of the situation, Jobs also had to consider their external ethos and how it shaped the internal ethos of the rhetorical act and how he relates his message to the students and the other audiences at the commencement ceremony. The unique aspect of this part of the analysis is that the students participated as a part of the ethos of Stanford since they exist within Stanford, and since they are a part of Stanford's ethos, their own personal ethos builds upon Stanford's ethos. Since the ethos of Stanford and the students are so closely intertwined Jobs needed to consider how he could both reflect the ethos and needs of Stanford, while also considering how to connect and understand the needs and ethos of the students and the other audiences. This builds upon the clear ideas that exist earlier in this essay, and allow for the breadth of the research to be supported by the depth of the analysis and understanding of the situation in which Jobs' speech occurred.

The unique unintended result of the speech was a moment of clarity and redemption for Jobs. At the very beginning of his speech Jobs sheds light on the fact that he never graduated from college, something that bothered both him and his parents at the time. Throughout the speech Jobs ties this starting story into the others, since they never would have happened if he had not dropped out, and as a result of dropping out he became a very successful man. Regardless of his success, the fact that he was asked to come to a college commencement ceremony (an occasion he never participated in himself) to give a commencement address to the

students and their families give him the ethos and grounding needed for a successful speech at the ceremony because Stanford is lending some of their ethos to him as well by selecting him as someone qualified to give the commencement address.

This action of being selected by Stanford drastically shifted the context of his speech and it is his use of persona that allows his ethos to be so strong throughout his speech because he builds upon the ethos lent to him before he even starts speaking. Since Stanford lends some of their ethos to Jobs it becomes combined with Jobs' own external ethos, meaning that the grounds set for Jobs to create his message and connect it to everyone involved in the rhetorical situation becomes easier, especially since the ethos of the students is so closely connect to that of Stanford since the students exist within Stanford's ethos and identity. Through the action of giving this speech, Jobs is able to complete the standard cycle of college in the United States; entrance, progression and exit into the working world. While he may not be exiting as a graduate, he is symbolically closing the door on a part of his life that had been left open for a very long time.

This article gives a different layer of perspective to viewing the rhetorical situation of a commencement address in our culture by viewing the internal and external constructs that shape the situation. By examining ethos in this manner, a deeper understanding of the role ethos plays in public speaking situations can be started and addressed, and the role ethos plays within the pentad can be given a new venue for research. While many articles on public addresses focus on the situation itself, this analysis looks at how the external and internal constructs impact each other and creates the internal ethos for Jobs in this speech. If we as a discipline were to view the speaking situations we analyze and interpret more from this stance, we may be able to draw deeper understandings of the speaking situation and how the speaker approached and created their persona for the situation.



## Conclusion

Overall this paper served as a preliminary glance into Jobs' 2005 Stanford commencement address to try to better understand how one's success and public standing affect their ability to persuade and impact an audience. To do this we applied Campbell and Burkholder's model on rhetorical criticism (persona, audience, structure, historical-cultural, contextual audience) and constructs from Burke, Bitzer, and Habermas in order to gain a deeper understanding of Jobs as a speaker and to evaluate the effectiveness of his message on those involved in terms of Jobs' ethos.

While a speaker can only control their view and understanding of the audience(s) in the rhetorical speech act, the external ethos of the speaker helps the speaker to connect more to the audience, meaning that the analysis of the speech given by Jobs at the 2005 Stanford commencement means that internal rhetoric is based upon and builds upon the external ethos of the speaker, as well as the external ethos of the organization that they represent. Meaning, that external ethos creates a deeper connection between the speaker and the audience(s) and also between the audience and the message(s) created in the rhetorical situation. This means that through the combined method approached used in the analysis of Jobs' speech the clear understanding of the role of ethos as a persuasive tool in a rhetorical act is more developed, because the connection of the speaker to the message and the audience to the message is more clearly defined, because ethos is no longer viewed as just a singular piece of persuasion, but a two-tiered aspect of the rhetorical situation. While there is still much more research and analysis to be done on this speech, it is safe to say that certain areas of analysis have started to peel back certain aspects of Jobs' rhetoric in a manner that allows us to see the key goals of his speech and how it was received by the audience(s) exposed to it.

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